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# THE INDEPENDENT

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FRIDAY 12 JANUARY 1996

KINGS OF GOAL

Section Two

**QUESTIONS OF SPORT:  
£40,000 TO BE WON**

 New scratch card in Saturday's paper  
See page 22

MOVE OVER

MEETING BLUE

Section Two, page 10

## Thatcher strikes at heart of Tory unity

Former leader delivers a right-wing blast

DONALD MACINTYRE

Baroness Thatcher last night undermined John Major's urgent attempts to reunite his party and prevent further left wing defections, by delivering a contemptuous dismissal of calls for "one-Nation Toryism."

In a uncompromising re-statement of her own right-wing, Euro-sceptic creed, Lady Thatcher derided exponents of the alternative view, such as the recently departed Emma Nicholson, as wanting "No-Nation Conservatism", on account of their espousal of "European federalism".

In a devastating critique of what she freely admitted were the "problems" now facing the Tory party, the former Prime Minister acknowledged that there had been "differences" between herself and Mr Major and suggested it was "haloney" for "malcontents" to argue that the Tory party had moved too far to the right.

on the way to a single European nation.

Her Keith Joseph memorial lecture attacked Labour for its addition to tax and spending, for its devolution proposals, which she said threatened "chaos", and for its embrace of European "federalism". She said that Labour's goals might deal a "terminal blow to the traditions of British parliamentary democracy".

On the Opposition leader himself, she was more muted, saying she only that doubted whether he would be able to control his party, or whether his "heart" and "gut" were not in favour of government spending.

The Tory high command put a brave face on her lecture last night, with Brian Mawhinney, the party chairman, saying that she had been "devastating" in her criticisms of the Labour Party. He went on to say that he welcomed "her restatement of the principles and policies which she put in place, and on which John Major has built and developed."

In private, some Tories expressed relief that she had not forecast a Labour victory, or explicitly criticised the Prime Minister for his refusal to rule out the possibility of a single currency in the next Parliament.

Nor did she flirt with the idea, which is canvassed among some of her supporters, that the Tories would benefit from a period of power. "The attractions of Opposition are greatly exaggerated by those who have not experienced it," she reminded them.

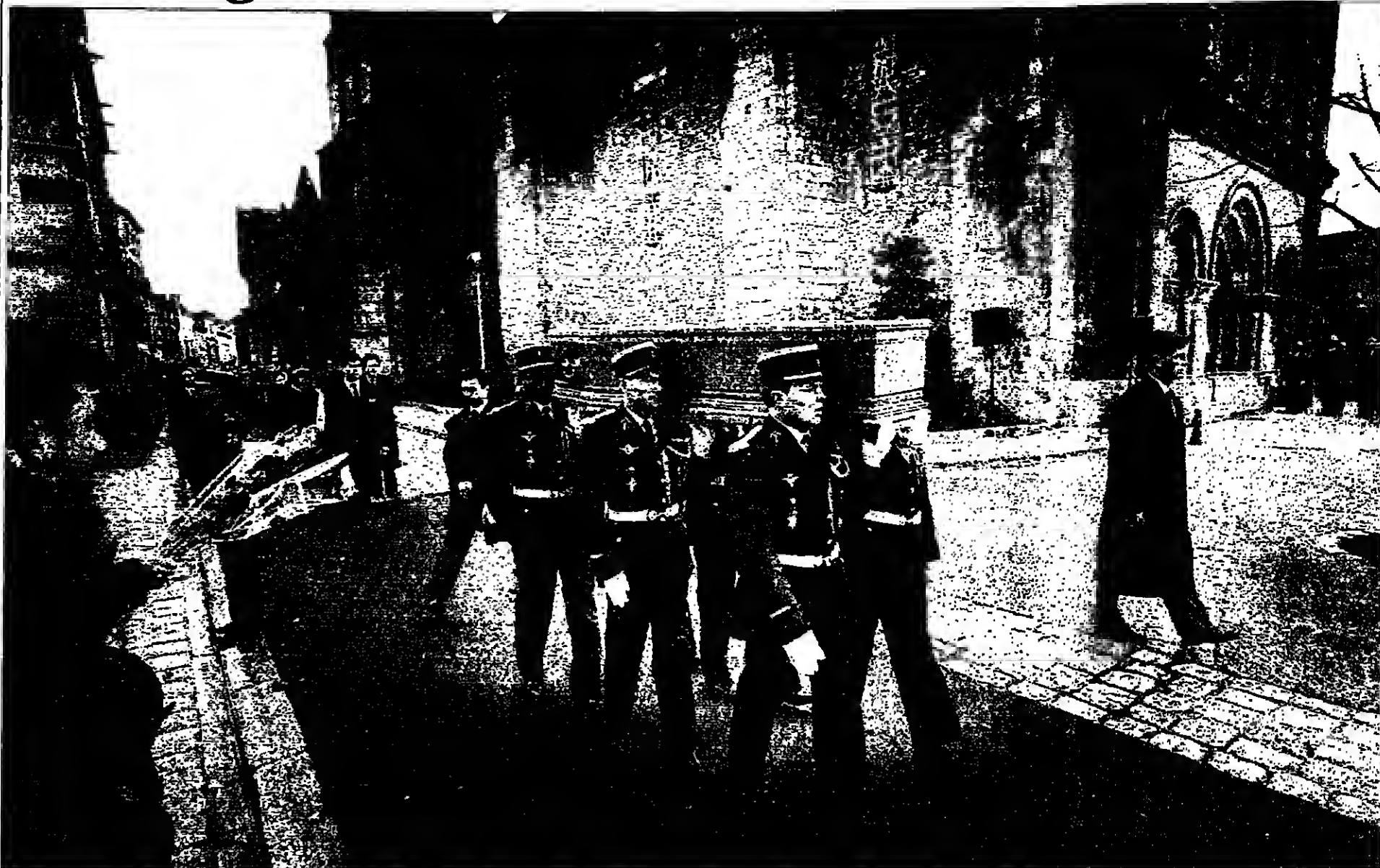
Admitting for the first time in public that it was "no secret" that she had differed "on occasion" from her successor, she insisted that these concerned means and not ends.

In the present Prime Minister, the Party has a leader who shares the broad analysis that Keith Joseph and I put forward," she said.

Lady Thatcher, gave a rare acknowledgement that her government had allowed the economy to overheat in the late 1980s. But in a speech that was in large part a passionate defence of her achievements in the 1980s, she said that public spending needed to be driven down far below the threshold sought by ministers of 40 per cent of national income. She also rejected the notion that she had ever been against society, saying only that she had opposed the idea that society could be identified with the state.

Thatcher's speech, page 2; Leading article, page 14

## Returning home: A small town receives its greatest son



Homecoming: Pall-bearers carry Mitterrand's coffin through his hometown Jarnac for the requiem mass at the church of Saint Pierre

Photograph: Brian Harris

## In a frozen waste, Chechens wait for death

Witness



Phil Reeves, in Pervomayskoye, southern Russia, finds the Chechen rebels bitter but determined

Salman Raduyev looked astonishingly calm, given his dilemma. The drone of helicopter gunships overhead was a non-stop reminder that he faced the full might of an outraged Russia and her army.

And if he, or his band of Chechen rebel fighters, had any further doubts about the scale of the surrounding enemy they need only have gazed across the dead-flat frozen landscape to the south at a horizon dotted with the turrets of field guns, armoured personnel carriers and the dark silhouette of countless troops.

Yet as he stood in the heart of his village refuge, the rebel outlined his demands as calmly as a schoolmaster giving out

a homework assignment. There was even a humorous twinkle in his deep-set eyes.

The Chechen leader and his fighters yesterday proved remarkably accessible, even though they remained under siege, holed up with scores of hostages during the second day of a stand-off with the Russian military following Tuesday's attack on Kizlyar in Russia's southern republic of Dagestan.

Reaching him was simply a matter of a 20-minute walk down an unguarded ice-covered road that led from the neighbouring village of Sovetskoye. Uncharacteristically - and amazingly, given their great determination to stop the Chechens fleeing - the Russians

had left a chink in their ring of steel.

In Pervomayskoye, a wind-swept farming village where the Chechens have been holed up since Wednesday, the mud-bound streets were deserted but for a handful of rebels. Some wore black balaclava masks; all carried machine guns. Beneath their green Islamic hand-dresses the eyes looked wary - but not at all afraid.

Raduyev, a lean man with a long red beard, was standing in the back yard of a small farmhouse, a handgun tucked into his belt. A few yards away lay a ghastly reminder of the price of this war: the bodies of three Chechens who died in the battle that ensued when rebels

took between 2,000 and 3,000 people hostage in nearby Kizlyar. "They're ours," he said, gazing at the bright blue cloths draped over the corpses. Two small children, a boy and a girl, emerged from the gloom of the house. Death in this part of the Caucasus is so commonplace that no one bothers to shield the young.

There was no sign of the hostages, and nor was it any longer clear exactly how many there were. The Russian authorities said there were 66, ex-

cluding 37 Ministry of Interior police seized by Chechens from a local command post at the start of the stand-off.

But Raduyev insisted he had 160, whom he said were split into groups and held in different houses around the settlement - a move that will make it much harder for the Russians to recover them by force.

What were clear, though, were his terms for ending the impasse. If his convoy was to continue to Chechnya, it would

TURN TO PAGE 2

## Heseltine admits hospital crisis

LIZ HUNT  
Health Editor

Michael Heseltine, the Deputy Prime Minister, yesterday admitted that the crisis over hospital beds was a "matter for concern" as the British Medical Association demanded urgent government action to help a system at "breaking point".

The doctors' demand came amid growing evidence of hospitals around the country having to take action to curb admissions. The BMA found examples of hospitals cancelling non-emergency operations and closing accident and emergency

facilities. Separate research yesterday by the *Independent* revealed that the problem was affecting hospitals nationwide.

GPs are spending hours on the telephone trying to place dangerously ill patients in hospitals, while accident and emergency departments are running at capacity, the BMA said.

A Welsh GP was told earlier this week that there were no acute beds in the whole of South Wales for a patient in need of immediate treatment, according to the association. One London hospital recently ran out of trolleys for patients in its A&E department for

whom no beds could be found. Another consultant said that patients in A&E were being accommodated on the floor.

Dr Sandy Macara, chairman of the BMA, said: "There is a cocktail of problems and it is a potentially lethal cocktail." He blamed the "wretched internal market" in the National Health Service which did not channel money where it was needed - to increase acute beds and staff - and "bed blocking" by elderly people because of the failure of community care.

A range of measures to counteract a staffing crisis in casualty departments, with nurses

allowed to do more medical treatments, was announced by the Department of Health earlier this week.

However, the BMA's report - and accusation that government health reforms are responsible - puts ministers under renewed pressure.

Emergency admissions have been at record levels for some time - increasing by 13 per cent between 1989/90 and 1993/94 - but the onset of the flu season, the meningitis scare, and the rise in fractures due to the cold weather have brought matters to a head.

'Perverse market', page 2

## Bosnia's children given £114,000 of hope

JOJO MOYES

Readers of the *Independent* have contributed £114,728 to our Christmas appeal to help the children of former Yugoslavia - money that is already being spent on food, medical treatment, counselling and reuniting them with their families. The largest amount - £44,934 - went to Save the Children. Lawrie Joshua, assistant director of the charity, said the money would help set up a registration and reunification programme for the children of Tuzla, and expand the scheme which already exists in Serbia-Montenegro.

He added: "For the 460 chil-

dren we have identified as unlikely to be reunited with their parents, the money will go towards helping develop long-term arrangements, such as foster care services and special programmes for children with disabilities.

"It's a tremendous boost to our efforts and we're delighted that *Independent* readers were so supportive of the campaign," he added.

The second largest beneficiary was the British Red Cross, which is using the £39,158 from *Independent* readers to help fund its programme for "nursing and tracing", which puts unaccompanied children back in touch with their parents. It



Four-year-old Amela Kurtovic

will also go towards the "school snacks" programme, which ensures 50,000 Bosnian children get food and milk each day.

Mike Whillam, director-general of the British Red Cross

said: "The conflict is over but our work now increases, helping the region move to reconstruction and rehabilitation."

Readers also raised £19,999 for the charity War Child. The money will be used to help set up a music therapy centre in Mostar; some will also go towards the £80,000 needed to finance the Nase Dijelet orphanage.

David Wilson, War Child's executive director, said: "Your appeal has made a significant impact. Both War Child and the young orphans in Tuzla wish to express their gratitude."

The final recipient was Child Advocacy, which is bringing Bosnian children to Britain for

urgent medical treatment and helping to rebuild medical facilities within the country.

Readers' donations totalling £10,636 have been forwarded to the charity, some of which has already been used to bring the first seven children to the UK.

All the children, whose conditions range from lymphoma to severe heart conditions, are responding well to treatment and the charity is planning to return one child - four-year-old Amela Kurtovic - when the political situation has stabilised.

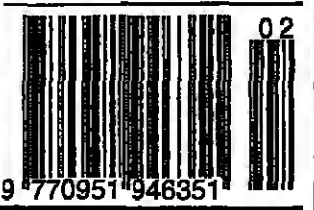
Amela was brought to the UK before Christmas so that doctors could carry out an operation on her leg, badly injured in a shell blast.

### IN BRIEF

**Woolwich bonanza**  
More than 3.5 million members of Woolwich Building Society will receive shares worth up to £1,000 when it becomes a bank next year. Page 3

**Crime fighters**  
Britain's first national crime squad is being set up to fight organised crime. Page 3

**Today's weather**  
Most areas will be bright, breezy and mild. Section Two, page 33


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## news

# Unionists spurn Sinn Fein arms plan

COLIN BROWN and  
DAVID MCKITTRICK

The Ulster Unionists last night delivered a setback to the peace process by pouring scorn on Sinn Fein's proposal to allow the IRA to decommission its own weapons.

The British government reacted more cautiously to the Sinn Fein statement after the international body on decommissioning IRA arms, led by

United States Senator George Mitchell, met John Major at Downing Street.

The Prime Minister told the Mitchell commission, which will go to Dublin today, that the Sinn Fein proposal had not altered Britain's demand that some progress should be made on decommissioning by the IRA before Sinn Fein is admitted to all-party talks.

The Prime Minister's office said the Government's policy

had not been changed by the Sinn Fein submission to the Mitchell commission, which was being studied by British officials before a definitive response was made.

There was cautious optimism initially that the proposals by Sinn Fein showed sufficient movement to put the peace process back on track. The idea of the IRA decommissioning its own weapons, overseen by an independent observer, was in

line with the range of options set out some months ago by British ministers.

First indications of a thaw from the Ulster Unionists were reversed, last night after the small print in the Sinn Fein statement had been studied.

Ken Maginnis, the Ulster Unionists' security spokesman, rejected a Sinn Fein suggestion that the IRA would consider destroying its own weapons only after an overall political settle-

ment on the future of Northern Ireland was reached. The idea was "totally unacceptable, unworkable and unattainable".

The Mitchell commission is due to report its conclusions to the governments' next week after talks today with John Bruton, the Irish prime minister, and discussions with Unionist MPs and loyalist representatives over the weekend.

In the document, Sinn Fein said Britain's proposal that

those in possession of illegal arms could be responsible for their destruction was a method which "may find acceptance" among republicans. But an early breakthrough in the statement on disarmament appeared unlikely as Sinn Fein ruled out any decommissioning before an overall political settlement.

Even a gesture at this stage would symbolise an IRA surrender, Sinn Fein said. Its spokesman, Martin McGuinness, claimed Britain's demands for the Provisionals to begin getting rid of the guns before the party could be allowed to sit at the negotiating table, were a stalling device and a bogus argument to avoid dialogue.

Meanwhile, an indication of the state of opinion in the Irish Republic came yesterday from Bertie Ahern, leader of Fianna Fail, who strongly criticised both Sinn Fein and the British government.

## IN BRIEF

## Pensioner injured in 'horrific' attack

A 74-year-old woman was recovering in hospital after being punched and stabbed by two men in an attack lasting more than three hours at her home in south London on Wednesday.

Police said that Rosemund Bean, who suffered a "horrific, sustained attack" had been followed to her home in Kennington from the Elephant and castle shopping precinct. They asked for assistance from the public in tracing the assailants, who were both light-skinned black men wearing dark clothing. One was around 6ft and the other was 5ft2in or 5ft3in.

Ms Bean was in St Thomas's Hospital, where her condition was stable.

## Orange shortage

The price of freshly squeezed orange juice could rise by 20 per cent unless the Brussels Commission changes its rules on imports, Lord Plumb, leader of the Tory MEPs, warned. The Late Valencia orange is the only fruit which meets British standards for freshly squeezed juice, but it is unavailable in Europe between December and April. Off-season imports from Cuba, Jamaica and South Africa have been hit by new high tariffs under the GATT world trade deal.

## Maxwell jury

The Maxwell trial jury was sent to a secret hotel for a fourth night after failing to agree verdicts on Kevin Maxwell, 36, his brother Ian, 39, and Larry Trahtenberg, 42, a former Maxwell aide, who all deny conspiracy to defraud pension funds of the Robert Maxwell Group. The jury of seven women and five men had been deliberating for 27 hours.

## Water charges

Ian Byatt, the water industry watchdog, has called on water companies to cut charges for making new connections to the water mains and has asked the Government to change the law to allow builders or contractors to carry out the work. Mr Byatt said charges for a domestic connection can vary from £310 to £826 across the country and that they often do not reflect the cost of doing the job.

## 'Middle class have lost the incentive'

In her first speech on domestic policy since she left office five years ago, Baroness Thatcher dismissed as "baloney" claims that the Tories have shifted too far to the right, and delivered a dire warning against shifting to the political centre ground.

She also used the Keith Joseph Memorial Lecture to mount a ferocious assault on Brussels that "our laws, our parliament, our freedom" were in peril.

"The Conservative Party has problems not because our analysis has been wrong or our principles faulty. Our difficulties are due to the fact that, in certain limited but important respects, our policies and performance have not lived up to our analysis and principles," she said.

"That is why the current idea, put around by some malcontents, that the Conservative Party is in trouble because it has moved to the right - and that this is what needs to be remedied - is baloney.

"The test is simple. Just ask yourself: is it because the Government has not spent, borrowed and taxed enough that people are discontented? Or is it because we have gone too far towards increasing Government spending, borrowing and taxation?"

"The answer is obvious. We are unpopular above all because the middle classes - and all those who aspire to join the middle classes - feel that they no longer have the incentives and opportunities they expect from a Conservative Government.

"I am not sure what is meant by those who say that the party should return to something called One Nation Conservatism. As far as I can tell by their views on European federalism, such people's creed would better be described as No Nation Conservatism.

"And certainly anyone who believes that salvation is to be

## Donald Macintyre analyses last night's speech by Baroness Thatcher

found further away from the basic Conservative principles which prevailed in the 1980s - small government, a property-owning democracy, tax cuts, deregulation and national sovereignty - is profoundly mistaken.

Despite praising John Major for sharing her "broad analysis", she appeared to cast serious doubt on his insistence that the Tories under his leadership were a party of the centre-right.

For the first time, Lady Thatcher admitted to making "mistakes" in the late 1980s, when inflation took off as the economy overcooked, but said the principles remained good.

"It would make no economic sense at all for us to move closer to the policies of our opponents. Rather, the economic challenge is to cut back the burden of state spending, borrowing and taxation still further," she said.

"Trying to move towards the centre ground makes no political sense either. It is not the centre but the common ground, the shared instincts and traditions of the British people, on which we should pitch our tents.

"That ground is solid, whereas the centre ground is as slippery as the spin doctors who have colonised it."

Lady Thatcher said it was no secret there had been differences "on occasion" between her and the Prime Minister, but they were limited to how objectives should be reached and not the nature of the objectives themselves.

"What is required now is that those objectives are clearly explained, so that a re-elected Conservative Government can go further toward



The Lady's not for turning: Baroness Thatcher's speech reflected her bitter opposition to European integration

Photograph: Dillon Bryden

fulfilling them. The attractions of Opposition are greatly exaggerated by those who have not experienced it," she said.

She said limiting the size of government remained "the great issue of British politics" but also called for strides in cutting spending and borrowing.

Chancellor Kenneth Clarke's commitment to reduce the proportion of public spending as a share of national income to below 40 per cent was welcome but needed eventually to be brought down "much more".

Lady Thatcher went on to praise the steady progress made by the Secretary of State for So-

cial Security, Peter Lilley, in cutting the welfare bill, the "courageous and far-reaching reforms" of Home Secretary Michael Howard and the claim by failed right-wing leadership challenger John Redwood that a European single currency was the first step to a united Europe.

And she further offered deliberate hacking to Defence Secretary Michael Portillo - the late figure of the Tory left - for his controversial party conference speech in which he "roundly and rightly attacked" proposals for a common EU defence policy.

She warned that the Euro-

pean Court was undermining both parliament and the judicial system, the EU defence proposals were a threat to national sovereignty and that a single currency would lead to a single nation.

Lady Thatcher added pointedly: "The Prime Minister will have the support of all of us who wish to see these dangerous and damaging proposals resisted and the present trends reversed as he argues Britain's case at the forthcoming Inter-Governmental Conference. And we look forward to a successful outcome."

"The European Union not

only wishes to take away our powers, it wishes to increase its own," she said.

"It wants to regulate our industries and labour markets, pontificate over our tastes, in short, to determine our lives."

"The Maastricht Treaty, which established a common European citizenship and greatly expanded the remit of the European Commission, shows the outlines of the bureaucratic superstate which is envisaged. Maastricht is the beginning, not the end, of that process.

"Self-government, limited government, our laws, our parliament, our freedom. These

things were not easily won. And if we Conservatives explain that they are now in 'peril', they will not be lightly surrendered."

She added: "Judging from the opinion polls, Opposition is where the electorate is at present inclined to send us. For a variety of reasons... I believe that this would be ill-judged on their part."

"The Conservative Party still has much to offer. And from Mr Blair's New - or not so new - Labour Party there is much to fear. But we must not ignore the present discontent."

Leading article, page 14

## THE INDEPENDENT ABROAD

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## Hospital crisis: BMA urges Government to reconsider strategy as problems deepen

### Doctors call for retreat on internal market

### Catalogue of bed shortages

Senior doctors yesterday called on the Government to reconsider the "perverse effects of the internal market" which they claimed had exacerbated the crisis in emergency admissions.

Bed and ward closures by trust hospitals desperate to balance their budgets had left thousands with limited access to emergency care, the British Medical Association said. Many trusts have run short of money as their contracts with health authorities run out with three months of the financial year left.

Dr Sandy Macara, chairman of the BMA, said: "The trouble is there are no central levers for the Government to ensure that money goes where it's most needed, because they have set up a system where it's left up to the individual purchasers and providers."

But Gerald Malone, minister for health, dismissed claims that Government healthcare reforms were to blame. He told *The World at One* on Radio 4 yesterday: "Thank goodness we now have a health service that can actually look at these things

## Analysis

at a local level." The department was aware of the problems in some areas and was investigating more flexible ways for hospitals to deal with emergency admissions.

One of the mysteries has been the relentless rise in emergency admissions. Several studies have investigated the phenomena but no consensus has been reached.

There is evidence some of the increase is what researchers describe as "sensible". There is greater awareness among GPs of the benefits of "dot-busting" drugs immediately after a heart attack, for example, so more patients are referred to hospital as emergencies as a result. Similarly, GPs and parents are alert now to the need for prompt treatment for meningitis so more suspected cases are being sent to hospital as a precaution.

In fact, a change in GP behaviour and patient attitude has been cited as a possible

cause of the growing pressure on accident and emergency departments, and indirectly, on the rise in emergency admissions.

Patients have become consumers of healthcare. If they are not satisfied with the care they receive, they self-refer to A&E.

Doctors are increasingly aware of the threat of litigation. Where there is doubt in the diagnosis or the seriousness of the patient's condition there may be a tendency to refer to hospital as an emergency to be on the safe side. Demand for GP night visits is also high and when this cannot be met, A&E is the next port of call.

The rise in emergency admissions has also been attributed to demographic changes, with growing numbers of frail, elderly patients. "Bed blocking" by the elderly because of a lack of community care facilities is being reported countrywide and, coupled with a steady decline in the number of acute beds, has intensified the general crisis in emergency admissions.

Liz Hunt

Some of the hospitals forced to take action over shortage of beds include:

Borders General Hospital, near Melrose, Scotland, has cancelled two or three non-urgent operations but it has transferred 50 per cent of day-patient beds to in-patient beds.

A spokesman said the hospital is under "extreme pressure" due to an unprecedented increase in the level of medical emergency admissions and staff sickness. Bridgend Hospital, Wales, had its accident and emergency department either effectively full or shut earlier this week.

Edinburgh Royal Infirmary stopped certain surgical procedures because of a nurse shortage last week.

Falkirk and District Royal Infirmary, Scotland, postponed 30 non-urgent operations this week as a direct result of pressure on beds.

Glasgow Royal Infirmary has had to cancel 73 operations this week and in the last few days medical patients have been transferred to surgical wards. It normally handles 50 emergency

admissions per day. This week the hospital opened an 11-bed winter medical ward, delayed since the start of November for lack of qualified staff.

Queens University Hospital, Nottingham, is said to be underfunded by £2m because it had exceeded its contracts. The 1,340-bed hospital claims "the biggest and busiest A&E unit in the country". Some 160,778 patients passed through the unit last year. All surgical procedures were stopped from December 18 to January 8 and wards were closed.

Whipps Cross Hospital, in Leytonstone, east London, has been on a "red alert" since 3 January. This means all elective admissions are cancelled and the hospital closed to ambulances expect for resuscitation and specialties such as maternity. The hospital has over 800 beds but none were free for emergency admissions yesterday afternoon. In accident and emergency last year, 79,700 people were treated of which about 20 per cent were admitted to wards.

Yesterday the village was filled by a ghostly calm as villagers, who fled when the Chechens arrived, returned to feed their cattle and chickens.

Tense deadlock, page 8

## In a frozen waste, Chechens wait for death

FROM PAGE 1

have to be accompanied by a human shield of international journalists, Dagestani and Russian officials and aid agency representatives.

"We don't want to hurt this village, and we don't want Dagestani to be drawn into this conflict," he said. But if Russia wanted to save the lives of the

hostages, he would need "hard guarantees".

Dudayev said that the rebel leaders decided to attack the air base at Kizlyar, where they destroyed two helicopters, after learning that eight Russian transport planes were soon to deliver a consignment of rockets for use in the Chechen war.

Seizing the hospital was not part of their initial plan.

They only resorted to it after some of their fighters were wounded. "But," he insisted, "we absolutely didn't touch the hostages. Absolutely not. We treated them as ourselves."

After releasing most of their captives, the rebels began their retreat to Chechnya on Wednesday morning in a convoy of nine buses with what

Raduyev described as a "minimum number of hostages". They did so after striking an agreement with Dagestani and Russian officials that they would receive safe passage back to the breakaway republic.

But after they had passed through Pervomayskoye, only yards from the Chechen border, a Russian helicopter fired a rocket in front of the convoy,

Raduyev asserted. The rebels immediately backedtrack to the village, captured the seven Interior Ministry police and their arsenal of weapons, and the impasse began.

Yesterday the village was filled by a ghostly calm as villagers, who fled when the Chechens arrived, returned to feed their cattle and chickens.

Tense deadlock, page 8

07/12/96



# Millions will share in Woolwich windfall

NIC CICUTTI

More than 3.5 million members of Woolwich Building Society, Britain's third largest, look set to share in a shares windfall worth at least £3bn following the society's announcement yesterday that it is planning to float on the Stock Exchange and become a hank.

Both the society's 600,000 borrowers and its 3 million-plus

share account holders will each be handed shares worth up to £1,000 in return for backing the flotation, due in August next year.

While exact details were not given yesterday, any handout will mirror that of the Halifax, which is to float in April 1997. Its members are to get a basic share allocation, plus a further amount depending on the amount in their accounts.

But about 30,000 new savers, described by the Woolwich chief executive, Peter Robinson, as "carpetbaggers", will not benefit from the free-share bonanza after opening their accounts too late.

Mr Robinson, whose board set last 31 December as the deadline for new accounts to be opened, said yesterday: "I have no conscience at all about not enfranchising carpetbaggers."

Other non-gainers include Woolwich's 400,000 Prime Gold current account-holders, plus the society's 80,000 unit trust investors. Neither category are deemed members of the Woolwich.

Woolwich's 17 directors, including the chief executive and chairman, who received a total £1.4m in payments during 1994, are likely to benefit from generous share option packages.

similar to those awarded to newly listed corporations.

Sir Brian Jenkins, chairman of the society, stressed that any future decisions on pay were "firmly in the domain of the remuneration committee", itself composed of Woolwich board members.

The Woolwich, founded in 1847, has assets of about £28bn and profits in the year to December 1994 stood at £302m.

However, the decision by other top-10 building societies to seek a share listing had intensified the pressure on the Woolwich.

Two turbulent years of mergers, flotations and takeovers among Britain's top building societies, including Halifax and Leeds Permanent, Cheltenham & Gloucester and National & Provincial, raised the possibility that the Woolwich might not

have been able to offer as competitively-priced loans or savings products, leading to decline.

Mr Robinson, admitted yesterday: "Powerful forces for change... are producing an intensity of competition that, through consolidation, will polarise the industry into well-defined groups of large and niche players."

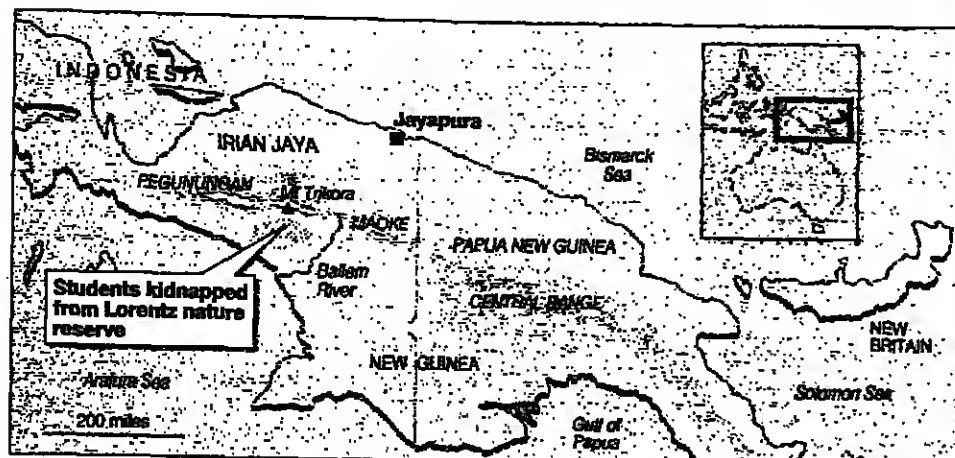
The move by the Woolwich also increases pressure on two

other leading societies, Alliance & Leicester and Nationwide, to declare their own hand. Nationwide ruled out any sudden announcement.

The Alliance, whose plans have been the subject of intense speculation, is believed to be almost ready to announce its plan to float.

But a spokeswoman said the society's board would "take any decision in its own time".

## Britons kidnapped on expedition to 'Stone Age' jungle



IAN MACKINNON

Foreign Office officials yesterday travelled to one of the remotest areas in the world in an attempt to glean information about four British researchers held by separatist guerrillas in the Indonesian jungle.

The four, among a group of 24 being held in Irian Jaya, all graduated from Cambridge University last year and were part of an independent expedition studying the region's important plant and wildlife.

Three hundred troops were reported to have been dispatched to the area where the group was seized, about 150 miles south-west of the provincial capital, Jayapura.

No ransom demands emerged from the kidnappers, but an Indonesian human rights group in London said they were being held by a unit of the Free Papua Movement to highlight their fight for independence. The group urged the British government to press Jakarta to negotiate with the kidnappers rather than use force.

The four, Daniel Start, 21, Bill Oates, 22, Anna McVoy, 21, and Annette van der Kolk, 21,

along with two Dutch and a German, were taken prisoner at their base in Mapenduma village on Monday. Tribal lifestyles in the area have changed little since the Stone Age.

Villagers are believed to have helped the rebels capture the expeditionary team, according to the Worldwide Fund for Nature, which employs the German and one of the Dutchmen. The other captured members of the



Bill Oates: 'Well equipped to cope with this situation'

team, which had been conducting research since September, are Indonesian.

The aim of the joint expedition, which had the backing of the Indonesian government and the support of a number of UK bodies, including the Royal Geographical Society, had been to chart the enormous biological diversity of the region.

The hope is that the reserve, which includes the Baliem Valley only discovered by Westerners in the 1930s, could become a national park and might eventually be nominated a World Heritage Site.

But the expedition was also working with the local community in an effort to develop a system of sustainable conservation that would also help the tribespeople maintain and improve their livelihoods.

The province is rich in copper, silver, gold, petroleum and nutmeg and draws scientists and tourists, often attracted to the Dani tribespeople, many of whom still wear grass skirts or penis guards.

Despite the primitive conditions and the remoteness of the area, Lorentz reserve had not been considered dangerous.



World apart: The lifestyles of tribespeople in the more remote jungle areas of Irian Jaya have changed little for thousands of years

though there have been a number of kidnappings of local people.

Yesterday, those who knew the seized Britons—all of whom are experienced travellers and veterans of a number of expeditions—were confident they would be tough and resourceful enough to handle their captivity.

Colin Bibby, conservation director of the charity BirdLife International, another of the expedition's backers, said: "They're young, fit people. They will be used to living in fairly basic circumstances on fairly basic food and being out of doors in the tropical forest.

They will be adequately equipped for that physically and mentally."

Dr Mark Warner, senior tutor at Corpus Christi, said Ms van der Kolk, from Fleet, Hampshire, had graduated with an honours degree in zoology in June. "She was a model stu-

dent academically and personally," he said. "She is outgoing with much energy and enterprise and much liked by her fellow students and teachers."

Judith Wright, a receptionist at Pembroke College, said Ms McVoy, from Bournemouth, was well-travelled. "It's difficult

to say how she would stand up to something like this, but she was always interested in travel and I would think she would stand up very well."

Dr Chris Burgoyne, former tutor of Mr Start, from London, at Emmanuel College, said: "I would imagine he would cope

with situations like this well. He is a hard-working young lad."

Dr Ken Riley, senior tutor at Clare College, said of Bill Oates, from Jedburgh: "I don't know if anybody can be expected to cope well in this sort of situation, but if I was choosing anyone, it would be Bill."

## Raiders stole £5m from post office after duping worker

JASON BENNETTO  
Crime Correspondent

Up to £5m in cash was stolen during a post office raid after criminals duped a postal worker into thinking they were holding his family hostage, it was revealed yesterday.

Five men, armed with shotguns and a handgun, handcuffed staff at the post office in Hastings, East Sussex, before driving off in a van.

The gang were able to execute a successful and speedy raid by gaining the help of a worker at the post office. He was approached in the street outside on Wednesday afternoon by one of the raiders and shown a photograph of his wife and children. He was then told that his family were being held

hostage and would be harmed unless he told them about the post office security and help them get in.

At 8.10pm on Wednesday—details of the raid were only released yesterday—a van containing four men, all wearing balaclavas, one with a pump-action shotgun, one with a sawn-off shotgun and another with a handgun—arrived at the post office in Cambridge Road.

The men were let into the building where they handcuffed two members of staff and tied up a third. They spent about 20 minutes loading the cash—intended for pensions and benefits payments—into the back of the van before driving off. No one was injured.

Only after the alarm had been raised did the employee

who had helped them realise their story had been a hoax. His family knew nothing of the raid and had not been held hostage. Armed police mounted an operation around the family's home in Hastings on Wednesday night but found them safe.

However, the police said yesterday that the man had been "terrified" and that the telephone lines to his house may have been cut because he was unable to reach them after being approached by the raiders.

A police spokesman said: "The photograph had been taken somewhere in Hastings, sometime before the raid happened. The post office worker had tried to contact his family after he was shown the picture but he couldn't get them on the telephone."

Detective Superintendent Paul Westwood said: "We are pursuing a number of lines of inquiry and will be interviewing staff later. The guns certainly looked real to the staff involved who were extremely frightened by what happened."

The robber carrying a pump-action shotgun was described as being in his 30s, with a stocky build and ginger eyebrows. His partner carrying a pistol was said to be 5ft 8ins and of medium build. He was wearing a black bomber jacket with a pilot's flying hat.

The raider who approached the post office worker was described as between 30 and 35, 6ft tall, clean shaven with a dark complexion. He was wearing a plain red baseball cap and had short dark hair.

## Local gangs 'pose big threat'

JASON BENNETTO

Traditional crime gangs are joining forces and pose a new national threat—surpassing the activities of groups such as the Triads and the Mafia—a big police and Home Office study has concluded.

The unpublished report is being used to influence the structure of Britain's first national crime squad, which is being set up to fight organised crime. Chief constables are to recommend a "two-pronged" national unit, with a co-ordinator in charge, the Independent has learnt.

One arm of the unit will use existing Regional Crime Squads to carry out investigations and arrests while intelligence gathering will be the responsibility of the National Criminal Intelligence Service NCIS, which will

include officers from MI5.

An 11-month study for the Association of Chief Police Officers has found that the new national unit should concentrate on targeting regional crime gangs, particularly those involved in drug trafficking. Contrary to previous reports, organisations such as Triads, the Mafia, Yardies and Russian criminals, pose little national threat compared to local gangs, says the study, *International, National, and Inter-force Crime*.

Research by the police, NCIS, and the Home Office discovered that traditional crime gangs in areas such as the North-west, the North-east, the Midlands, and the South-east, are joining forces for operations involving robbery, armed crime, and drug dealing.

Colin Phillips, assistant chief constable at Greater Manches-

ter police, who was in charge of the Acpo crime committee study, said: "The biggest threat is now from local criminals who get together and organise themselves for a common purpose. There's no godfather who runs everything, but groups who join up for particular crimes or share contacts."

The study says that drugs are by far the most popular and lucrative business among the criminals. It estimates that there are about 300 big criminals and that about 10 per cent of all crimes are carried out by villains from outlying police force areas or from abroad.

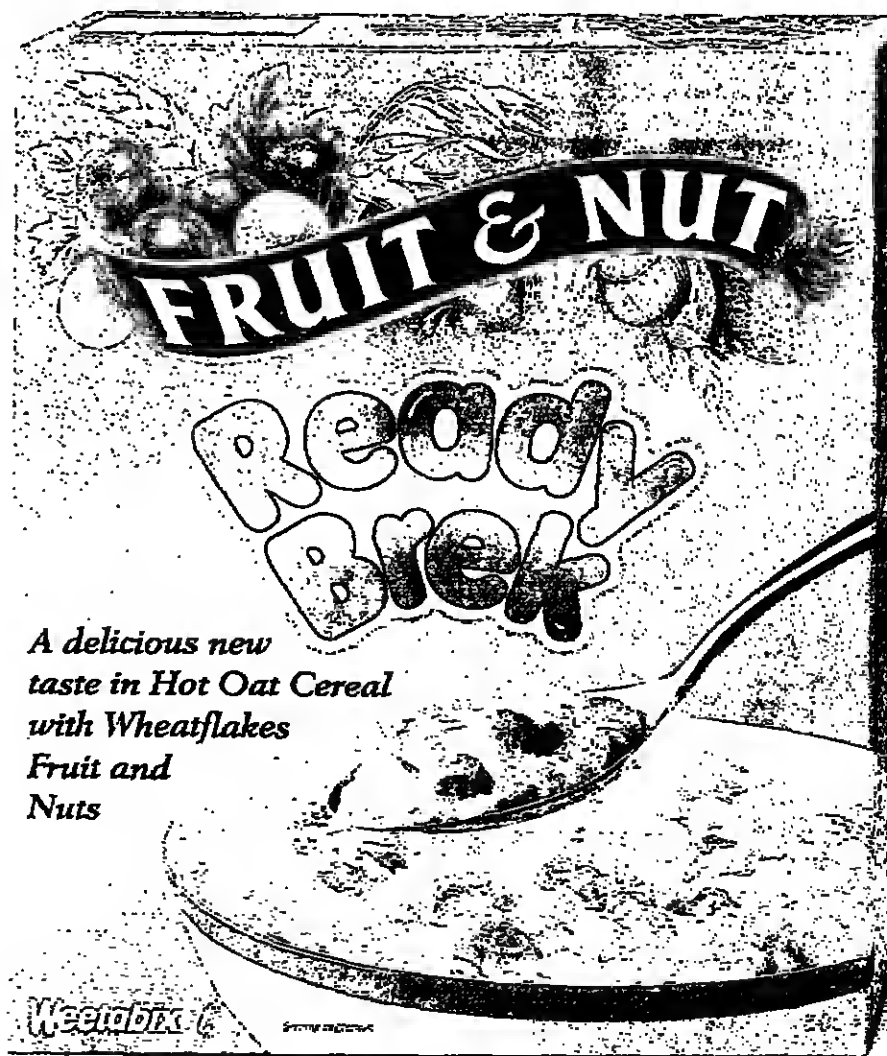
The report also says that the powers of foreign-influenced outfits are greatly exaggerated, particularly with Jamaican 'Yardie' gangsters and Russian criminals. There is however, more evidence of the involve-

ment in Britain of the Italian Mafia, Chinese Triads, and West African criminals. They are involved in a range of crimes including drug and arms dealing, extortion and money laundering.

The study—which will be formally presented on 7 March—was set up to help inform police chiefs in England and Wales who are finalising their proposals for the forthcoming national crime unit.

Police chiefs intend to have a national operational arm made up of the 1,400 officers in the existing six Regional Crime Squads, which tackle serious offences.

The second wing would be the intelligence gathering side, headed by an enhanced National Criminal Intelligence Service, which at present has about 500 staff.



## Grown-up Ready Brek.

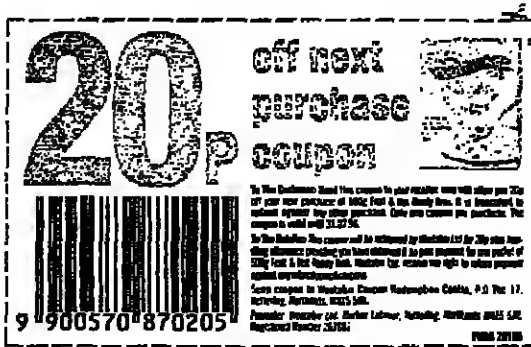
(With fruit, nuts and a bit of pocket money thrown in.)

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## news

**Battle of Newbury:** Protesters claim another victory at road site while effort to have camps outlawed in High Court is delayed

# Work on bypass halted for third successive day

DANNY PENMAN

Contractors were forced to abandon work on the Newbury bypass for the third day running yesterday as activists threw themselves in front of a hydraulic digger and climbed up its arm.

Workmen flanked by 150 security guards had begun uprooting trees at the northern end of the site at 9am but after an hour of struggles, watched by 50 police officers and involving 80 activists, work was stopped.

Although the Third Battle of Newbury protest group described their victory as "3-0 to us", they are perplexed by their success.

Paul, one of the co-ordinators of the campaign, said: "I don't understand their tactics at all. From the beginning we expected them to send out two or three clearance crews at once but they just aren't doing that."

Both sides are keeping a high proportion of their resources in reserve, making the anti-road struggle a game of strategy.

The campaigners have not mustered more than a quarter

of their supporters so far. They are worried about committing too many people to stop clearance work at one site in case work starts simultaneously at several others.

Reliance Security, the firm providing the guards, has likewise never committed more than 150 people out of an estimated 500-strong presence. Reliance has refused to give any details of its plans.

The controversy over the bypass of the Berkshire town continued in the High Court yesterday. The Highways Agency is trying to get eviction orders for the protest camps along the new road's planned route. A full hearing of its case against the people in two camps was postponed until 26 January so it can be heard together with the cases on two other camps. Since the Highways Agency applied for possession of the four camps, another eight have been established.

The vice-principal of a school for the deaf close to the route of the bypass yesterday expressed his "deep concerns" about the bypass. Many deaf people can still hear low fre-

quencies sounds. The bypass will sweep within 500 metres of the school.

Tony Shaw, of Mary Hare Grammar, fears that the deep rumble of heavy trucks may swamp the residual hearing of the deaf children at the school.

The Highways Agency says they have assessed the noise impact on the school. Mr Shaw said the techniques used by the agency were inadequate because they only measured the sound detected by people with normal hearing. "If you can hear only at low frequencies then you're damned," he said.

The Highways Agency said it would build earth embankments, plant trees and use porous Tarmac to dampen down the road noise. Low frequency noise, however, is transmitted through the ground rather than air and is very difficult to counteract using normal road-building techniques. The Highways Agency says the new road will be no closer to the school than the existing A34. However a greater length of road will pass close to the school and the resulting noise level may be greater.



Hot-trick: Jubilant anti-road protesters embracing after halting work on the Newbury bypass for the third day running

Photograph: John Voss

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LOUIS ARMSTRONG.



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## Burns 'find' breathes life into Rabbiefest

JOHN ARLIDGE  
Scotland Correspondent

A festival marking the 200th anniversary of the death of the poet Robert Burns, which almost collapsed in chaos last month, received a timely boost yesterday when a Dumfriesshire poet claimed he had discovered 40 new works by Scotland's national bard.

Patrick Hogg, a poet and singer from Stranraer, is convinced that the works, uncovered in yellowing newspaper files, are genuine. The radical political poems published in the 1790s bear the *nom de plume* "A Briton", a known Burns pseudonym, and are in the anglicised style Burns used when writing his political satire.

Mr Hogg, 35, found the works while examining claims Burns made in a 1794 letter that he had written for the London-based *Morning Chronicle* and the *Edinburgh Gazetteer*. "I just started looking at back copies of the newspapers in Glasgow libraries, thinking that it would be a billion-to-one chance that I would find anything," he said. "But I came across these works. I looked at the style and the names and more I looked at them the more convinced I became that they were the real thing."

Although senior academics have cast doubt on the find, describing Mr Hogg's analysis as

Excerpt from a 'discovered' poem



We brib'd to divide them,  
Tried all arts to chide 'em;  
To starve them, made a  
great fuss;  
When some Demon of Hell,  
Inverting the spell,  
Turn'd the picture of  
Famine on us!

1795. Signed 'A Briton'

"naïve", organisers of this year's troubled Burns Bicentenary Festival, who have spent the last month fending off allegations of mismanagement and impropriety, welcomed the news.

John Struthers, the festival director who took up his post after his predecessor, Eric Rowe, suddenly fled amid a cash crisis, said: "This is great news. More research is needed before we can begin revising our anthologies, but it is creating renewed interest in Burns 200 years after he died and that, after our difficulties, is terrific."

Mr Hogg presented his discovery at a conference on Robert Burns at Strathclyde University yesterday. The Burns enthusiast, who is writing a book on poet called *The Patriotic Bard*, said the *nom de plume*

and works "fitted Burns's ideas and style in the late 18th century before he died".

His claims have divided academics. Dr Andrew Noble, senior lecturer in English studies at Strathclyde, told delegates he believed the poems "resembled" Burns's style and could well be authentic. But Dr James Mackay, Burns's biographer who has edited a collection of the bard's poems and letters, has examined six of the poems and declared them fakes. Computer analysis of the texts, to be carried out later this year, will resolve the controversy.

The Burns International Festival, dubbed the "Rabbiefest", opens in Dumfries, where Burns died, next week with a torchlight procession and a *ceillidh*.

## Women 'paying double for care'

GLENDIA COOPER

Women will be charged twice as much as men for long-term care insurance, a leading insurance company said yesterday.

The Prudential, which was giving evidence to the Health Select Committee inquiry into long-term care, said that while a 30-year-old man would pay nearly £200 per year if insurance policies were taken out, a woman "would end up paying 100 per cent more than that".

Keith Bedell-Pearce, managing director of Prudential, told MPs that people would have to realise that "responsibility for care in extreme old age or infirmity will rest at least in part on the individual."

"When the rainy day comes they need to have made some provision," he added.

He said that some addition to pension funds would seem the most obvious solution.

About one in four people will end up in long-term care and the number of 85 years olds has increased three-fold.

The Prudential estimated that if a 30-year-old male who took out long-term care insurance 30 years before he needed it would have to pay £190 a year for care equivalent to £15,000 a year.

A woman would end up paying around £380.

Similarly, for a 50-year-old male to take out such insurance he would have to pay around £450 a year.

For women, the figure would be nearer £900.

The reason why women would pay so much more than men is because of their longer life expectancy. At present, 80 per cent of those aged over 85 are women.

Both the Prudential and the National Association of Pension Funds said that demographic changes over the next 30 years meant that it would be very difficult to offer a "pay as you go" scheme, by which the present generation pays through deductions for the generation before.

Mr Bedell-Pearce said that many people were upset at the thought of selling their houses to pay for their care, instead of passing it on to their children.

"The majority of children are relaxed about the family home being used to support their parents in their old age but their parents are reluctant to do so."

But he added: "The state will always have to provide a safety net for the less well-off who are not able to make adequate provision."

## Teenagers held over head's murder

Five teenage boys have been arrested in connection with the murder of the London headmaster Philip Lawrence, Scotland Yard said yesterday.

Three of the arrests were made at addresses in north London: a 17-year-old boy from Holloway; a 15-year-old from Crouch Hill and another 15-year-old from Camden.

A 16-year-old boy was arrested in central London and a 14-year-old from the Harrow Road area of north-west London, police said.

They are being held at stations across the capital in connection with the murder and on suspicion of conspiring with others to use grievous bodily harm on a 14-year-old boy.

A 15-year-old boy was this week again remanded by Camden Youth Court into secure local authority accommodation accused of the headmaster's murder.

Mr Lawrence, a 48-year-old father-of-four, died after he was stabbed when he went to the aid of a pupil following a disturbance outside St George's Roman Catholic School in Maida Vale, north-west London.

John Voss



## Is huge 'power tower' just pie in the sky?

TOM WILKIE  
Science Editor

A "power tower", seven kilometres high, which could produce pollution-free energy from the North Sea is being proposed by researchers in the Netherlands.

Its proponents claim that the tower could generate nearly twice as much electricity as Drax, Britain's largest power station, by harnessing the same natural system that causes water to evaporate from the oceans and fall as rain.

The four-mile-high structure would be nearly 30 times taller than Britain's highest building, Canary Wharf Tower (244 metres) and only 1,848 metres lower than the summit of Everest. But civil engineers doubt that it could be built, and renewable energy experts said there were better ways of generating non-polluting energy.

At the top of the "MegaPower Tower", ammonia or hydrogen gas would condense in the cold of the upper atmosphere and then fall through a turbine to the bottom, where heat flowing from the warm sea would evaporate it and start the cycle over again.

According to *New Scientist* magazine, a year-long feasibility study carried out by Novem, the Netherlands energy and environmental agency, on behalf of the government, concluded that such a vast structure should not be impossible to build.

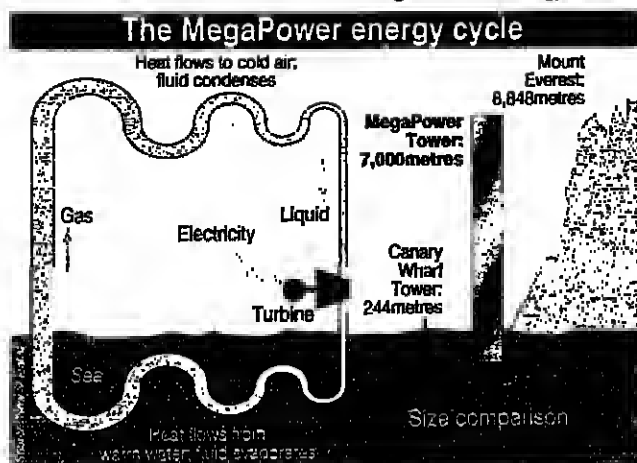
However, since the tower would be more than 10 times

taller than the highest man-made structure – the 646-metre Warsaw radio mast in Poland – this claim has been greeted with scepticism. The mast fell down in 1991, just 17 years after it had been erected. Even if the tower's construction were feasible, energy experts doubt that it would be much use.

One of Britain's foremost advocates of renewable energies, Dr John Twidell, of De Montfort University in Leicester, pointed out that conventional gas turbines generate electricity efficiently – converting at least 50 per cent of the heat energy into electricity – because of the high temperatures of combustion. But the proposed tower would produce a temperature difference of only about 20°C to 30°C and so "in engineering terms, the thermodynamic efficiency would be very low," he said. "The tower would be very inefficient."

Dr Twidell continued: "It is a fallacy to believe we are short of energy – there is an abundance – the challenge is to harness that in a cost effective way. It is clearly cheaper to have a wind turbine that goes up 50 metres than a tower that is seven kilometres high."

Adrian Fox, of the engineering consultants Arup, told *New Scientist*: "It's an exciting idea, but when you start conceiving of structures that are so huge, you can't really make reliable comments without doing a detailed study. If feasible, it would require significant breakthroughs in technology."



Capital concepts: Sir Richard Rogers, chairman of the Architecture Foundation, showing the biggest model of London ever made – created by the architectural specialists Pipers – to children yesterday in Westminster at the launch of a campaign to improve the quality of life in the city. The view is from the east, looking west. Photograph: Nick Turpin

## GTECH to sue Branson over lottery bribe claim

REBECCA FOWLER

The head of GTECH, the American technology company that has a 22 per cent stake in running the British National Lottery, is suing the Virgin boss Richard Branson following Mr Branson's allegation last month that he was offered a bribe to drop out of the race to run the national lottery.

Guy Snowden, chairman of GTECH, which provides equipment for 72 lotteries world-wide, was accused of offering Mr Branson the inducement to withdraw his bid during lunch at his house in Holland Park, west London in 1993.

But Mr Snowden has denied the comments made by Mr Branson, chairman of the Virgin group, in an interview on the *Panorama* programme, which he dismissed as "outrageous" and "untrue" at the time. "I have taken this action to restore my good name," he said.

According to Mr Branson, he was so shocked by the offer of a bribe that he took down a note of the conversation, which he said recorded Mr Snowden saying: "Richard, there's always a bottom line. I'll get to the point. In what way can we help you?"

Mr Branson said the offer followed his decision to make his bid for the lottery non-profit making. He said the extra money would go towards the good causes that benefit from the lottery. According to Mr Branson he was told by Mr Snowden that his plans could cost them "hundreds of millions of pounds."

Mr Branson has already issued a writ against GTECH, and is suing the company for accusing him of lying in the *Panorama* interview. He has also refused to co-operate in an inquiry into his claims being led by Oflot, the lottery watchdog.

According to Mr Branson, the inquiry may not be independent because it was set up by Peter Davis, the head of Oflot, who fought off calls for

his resignation last year after he admitted accepting a series of free flights from GTECH during a trip to the United States. The battle for the lucrative seven-year licence to run the lottery was eventually won by Camelot, which is making £1m in profits each week from the lottery. It accepted GTECH as a partner and struck a deal for the company to provide the machinery for the British lottery.

Camelot has backed Mr Snowden in refusing that the offer of a bribe ever took place, but the company has refused to comment on the legal action.

"It is a matter between GTECH and Mr Branson," a spokeswoman said.

Mr Davis denies he was made aware of Mr Branson's claims when he vetted the companies involved in the bid to run the lottery. After the *Panorama* interview, he said he was also considering legal action for any suggestion that he was aware of the allegations of bribery.

Oflot said yesterday: "Mr Davis is not actively considering it at the moment, but he has not ruled it out."



Richard Branson: Issued writ

## Two arrested over murder of man abandoned in flat



Alan Holmes: 'He would give the shirt off his back'

JASON BENNETTO  
Crime Correspondent

Two men were being questioned last night by detectives investigating the murder of a civilian police mechanic, who died after being beaten by burglars and left tied to his bed without food and water for 10 days.

The men, both in their mid-twenties, were arrested at 6am at an address in Kentish Town, north London.

Alan Holmes, 53, a garage hand at Kentish Town police station, died in hospital from blood clots and dehydration. He had been tied so tightly that circulation had been cut off to his hands and feet. Police said yesterday his cries for help would have gone unheard at the flat.

Mr Holmes was described as a quiet, gentle man who had studied law at Belfast University, but failed to graduate, before moving to London, where he had lived in the same flat for 30 years.

Burglars had broken into his second-storey home above an empty shop in Parkway, Camden Town, in the early hours of Boxing Day.

The alarm was raised when he failed to return to work on 2 January and police eventually broke in on 4 January.

His two bank cash cards had been taken and used to withdraw £1,000, police said. His passport, driving licence and a Victorian silver picture frame were also taken.

Police said robbery appeared the only motive for the killing. Detective Chief Inspector John Yates said Mr Holmes was too ill to give a full statement before he died.

He added that Mr Holmes may have been targeted because

he was well known to people in the area.

"Mr Holmes led a very, very quiet lifestyle. He did not drink, except for perhaps half a pint at Christmas. This was a horrendous attack, truly awful. He had serious injuries and could not move for 10 days."

Mr Holmes's sister, Mavis Yule, 55, said: "He was in a dreadful state. I don't know how anyone could have done this."

"He was a friendly, gentle person. He loved poetry and should have been a writer. He was very kind and would have given you the shirt off his back."

"Living in London, he saw people begging and sleeping in doorways. He felt very sorry for these people. He may have given them money for soup or given them a blanket – but he would never have let anybody he did not know into his flat."

## Rise in road deaths revealed

CHRISTIAN WOLMAR  
Transport Correspondent

Road deaths are set to show the first increase since 1989, after figures released yesterday revealed that 2,614 people had died in the first nine months of last year, compared with 2,601 in the same period in 1994.

The number of deaths in 1994, a total of 3,653, were the lowest since the Twenties and ministers had hoped that there would be a continued decrease. The Government aims by 2000 to have reduced by one-third the annual number of casualties recorded on the roads during the early Eighties.

While the numbers killed and seriously injured have gone down already by more than one-third, there has been an increase in overall casualties of around 4 per cent since the early Eighties.

The figures for the first three-quarters of 1995 show that the number of seriously injured on

the road has gone down slightly from 33,663 in 1994 to 33,247 in 1995, a drop of 1 per cent. The number of minor injuries remained almost exactly the same at 191,487 compared with 191,501 the previous year.

The Government appears to be so embarrassed by the upturn in deaths that it has issued press releases implying there has been no rise. The one published yesterday was headed by "road deaths show little change in the third quarter of 1995" when in fact there has been a 3 per cent increase in that quarter compared with the same period in the previous year. In years when there have been similar decreases, the press releases have reflected this by boasting of 2 per cent or 3 per cent reductions.

A Department of Transport spokesman said that material was presented in order to convince people that "their individual actions in driving more safely were worthwhile".

## Teenage terrors 'should be caged'

Police chiefs in the north-east yesterday called for new laws so that the most persistent juvenile offenders can be kept locked up before being dealt with by courts.

The Northumbria force was the first in Britain to highlight the "mini crimewaves" of problem 13- to 14-year-olds who are constantly arrested and released to carry out more crime.

Now, with the problem becoming worse and indications of children as young as 10 starting on crimewaves, the force is calling for an overhaul of the justice system with faster processing and custody for young offenders in the same way that adult suspects are held.

At present, the majority of juvenile offenders have to be released pending court action because there are so few suitable secure places nationally for holding them. But while they are awaiting court action, the worst young villains carry on offending – statistics disclosed yesterday described a sample of 35 in the Northumbria force area who were arrested a total of 639 times for more than 1,300 offences last year.

Assistant Chief Constable Alan Brown said: "Unless we devise a way to deal quickly with repeat juvenile offenders, those intent on a criminal career progress at a terrifying pace."

"Our findings demonstrate that if you don't keep the nucleus of prolific offenders in custody they go straight out and commit a wide variety of further offences, often drawing other youngsters into criminality."

Mr Brown said during this repeat-offending, juveniles were liable to clock up so many crimes that by the time the system caught up with them, the courts could only "administer justice for a fraction of the offences. This makes a mockery of the criminal justice system, does nothing to discourage the individual, spreads fear of crime and adds to victims' frustration."

## MATHS on VIDEO

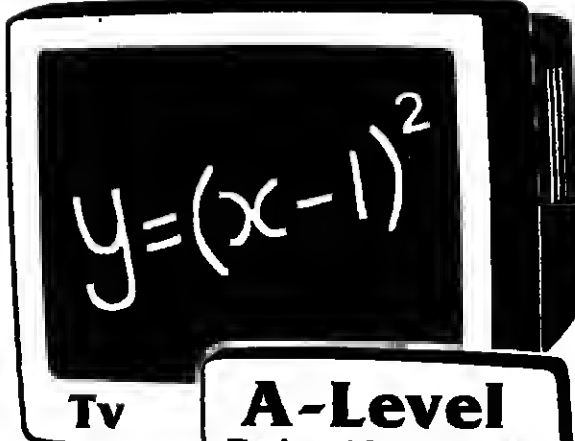
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# politics



Day's end: A man walking through the winter dusk on the Mound, in Edinburgh. Scottish ministers are against the Bill Photograph: Rod Sibbald

## MPs angry at minister opposing daylight Bill

COLIN BROWN  
Chief Political Correspondent

Michael Forsyth, the Secretary of State for Scotland, is facing angry Tory backbench protests over his efforts to kill a Private Members' Bill to provide more daylight hours by putting British clocks forward an hour.

John Butterfill, the Tory MP

for Bournemouth West, promoting the Bill, appealed personally to the Prime Minister at a Downing Street meeting to stop the Government allowing it to be killed on its second reading on 19 January in the Commons.

John Major refused to offer any assurance that the Bill will be allowed to go through to the committee stage. The Scottish

ministers are preparing to vote against it, and all other ministers have been ordered to abstain. Although the Bill has cross-party support, there is strong opposition from MPs who warn it would mean millions of workers and schoolchildren starting out in the dark in the mornings.

The Communication Workers Union, representing 130,000 post

deliverers, has urged MPs to vote against it and yesterday protested to the Advertising Standards Authority over claims that it would save lives. Mr Forsyth has made his opposition to the British Time (Extra Daylight) Bill clear. He took the unusual step of issuing a statement challenging statistics from the Department of Trans-

port suggesting more daylight hours would reduce accidents. "It is misleading of proponents of John Butterfill's bill to claim that there would be a significant reduction in road-accident casualties," he said. But Mr Butterfill said a study by Heriot-Watt University in Edinburgh showed the DoT figures were sound.

- Mackay hints at deal on Family Law Bill
- Heseltine sidesteps taunts over Thatcher

## Divorce rebels scent victory on waiting time

Lord Mackay, the Lord Chancellor, confirmed last night that he would "listen carefully" to demands for an extension of the time for reflection under the controversial Family Law Bill from 12 to 18 months.

The Lord Chancellor emphasised that he still preferred a year-long period during which divorcing couples would have to resolve differences over children and finances.

While government colleagues fear that the concession may be necessary to buy off revolts on other parts of the Bill, Lord Mackay's Labour opposite number, Lord Irvine of Lairg, urged him to resist pressure for the change from anti-divorce fundamentalists.

The shadow Lord Chancellor sought to reassure Lord Mackay during the opening day of line-by-line examination in the Lords committee stage that an overwhelming majority

of Labour peers would resist any move by the Government to lengthen the waiting time to 18 months or even two years, which would exacerbate the trauma of divorce for children. No sooner had he sat down, however, than he was contradicted by the Labour peer Lord Stoddart of Swindon, who declared: "I shall certainly be

of parents turning up at 10am "like waiting their turn in the doctor's surgery", he said. "A mandatory year for reflection and consideration during which mediation takes place is surely much more seemly than the conveyor belt approach I have described."

With flashes of the old showman, Michael Heseltine neatly kept his balance at Question Time on the backs of two wayward Tory chargers and their divergent views on Europe.

Charger One was Baroness Thatcher who reassured herself last night with an attack on "so-called" Ose Natioo Conservatives as European federalists. Charger Two was the Deputy Prime Minister himself, or at least his former self.

Labour's Mike O'Brien had helpfully pointed out that Mr Heseltine was "the one who wielded the knife that did her". Given this, would he reaffirm Mr Major's view that Britain should be at the heart of Europe and "his own stated [1987] view that there can be no truly unified single market without a single currency"? Mr Heseltine said the purpose of being in Europe was to fight for British interests. "That was very much the view of Lady Thatcher, as it is of the Prime Minister."

Another Labour backbencher, Peter Pike, asked why Mr Heseltine had considered it essential in 1990 that Lady Thatcher "be removed from office". Delighted MPs thought the deputy PM had scant room to manoeuvre, but he said that after resigning in 1990 he had done all in his power to secure Lady Thatcher's re-election. "I regard the fact that I played such a conspicuous role in the 1987 campaign in which Mrs Thatcher was re-elected as no mean achievement."

**Inside Parliament**  
**Patricia Wynn Davies**

supporting amendments which give a much longer time for consideration and reflection."

Lord Stoddart and fellow Labour peer Lord Stallard had joined forces with the Tory peers Baroness Young – the *de facto* leader of the rebellion against the Bill – and Lord Ashbourne. All four are bitterly opposed to the Bill's proposals to do away with the grounds of adultery and unreasonable behaviour and allow "no fault" divorce after a year.

Lord Irvine made clear his broad support for the measure, emphasising that three-quarters of all divorces are currently "quickie" ones granted within a few months, with only the remaining 25 per cent waiting two years for a divorce by consent after two years' separation. "There is no greater formality than renewing a driving licence," Lord Irvine said as he described current district court procedures in which judges terminated clutches of marriages en bloc. Appointments with judges to ensure the interests of children had been satisfied involved two dozen sets

## Lib Dems appeal for candidates

JOHN RENTOUL  
Political Correspondent

The Liberal Democrats face the embarrassing prospect of being unable to field parliamentary candidates to fight every seat in Looadoo at the next general election, according to an internal party circular calling for anyone "remotely interested" to put themselves forward.

The call suggests that the party is weak in large parts of the capital, as it is squeezed by Tony Blair's "new" Labour Party.

A briefing for Liberal Democrat members in the London region appeals for volunteers to come forward. "If you or anyone you know in your area is remotely interested in fighting a seat at the general election, then now is the time to get an application form," it says.

The party has recently placed advertisements in the *Liberal Democrat News* for a "large number" of London constituencies. "Unfortunately, there have not been as many replies to these adverts as we... would have liked," the circular complains.

Frank Dobson, Labour's spokesman on London issues, said yesterday: "They'll soon have to start asking strangers in

pubs. Even that'll fail... The Liberal Democrats have no ideas and are going nowhere. People know only Labour can put right the mess made by the Tories."

The Liberal Democrats are haunted by the eve-of-poll defection of their candidate for the by-election in Newham North East in 1994. Alistair Kellaway, a former SDP defector from Labour, stunned the party in the east London borough by announcing he was rejoining Labour because he was so impressed by Mr Blair, who was already the favourite to succeed John Smith as Labour leader.

The Liberal Democrats' search for candidates has become more urgent as the Tory majority at Westminster is whittled away – most recently by the defection to the Liberal Democrats of Emma Nicholson.

In 53 of the 74 greater London constituencies, the Liberal Democrats are more than 20 per cent behind one or other of the two main parties.

So far, they have selected candidates in more than 250 out of the 641 seats in Great Britain, and a spokesman promised: "People will have the chance to vote Liberal Democrat wherever they are."

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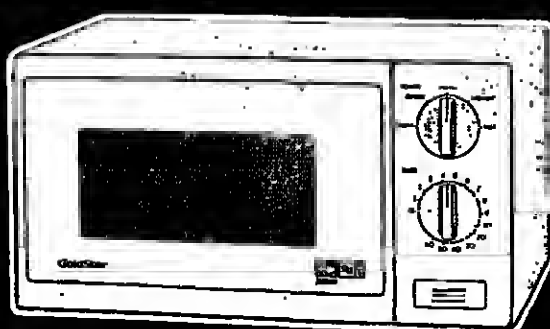
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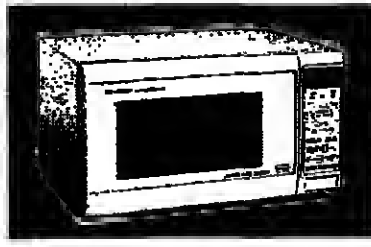


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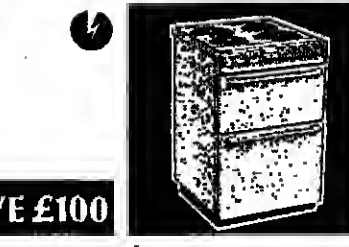
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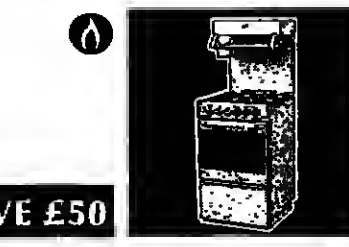
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# Inquiry told of Chinook pilots' safety fears

Test pilots refused to fly the type of Chinook that crashed into the Mull of Kintyre killing 29 people because of software problems, an inquiry was told today.

The problem was in software controlling the engines – and was one of a catalogue of problems with the newly introduced Mark 2 Chinook.

Other problems included "spurious" engine failure warnings, a military pilot told the fa-

tal accident inquiry at Paisley, Strathclyde.

The test pilots refused to fly the aircraft for a time because "they could not get the software tested properly", the

airman told Aidan O'Neill, for the family of Flt Lt Jonathan Tapper, who died in the crash.

Apart from the RAF crew, other victims included the elite of Ulster's counter-terrorist services – 10 members of the

RUC Special Branch, nine Army intelligence officers, and six M15 officers.

A Ministry of Defence letter was read out which confirmed that tests of the aircraft had been suspended for a period, but it went on to say that it would be an "oversimplification" to say the test pilots had refused to fly it.

The letter, from a colonel in the Ministry of Defence pro-

urement executive, said tests were halted on airworthiness grounds while a fault was being investigated.

There were a number of incidents involving the Mark 2 Chinook in the months before the crash on 2 June 1994, the inquiry was told. These included a spurious engine failure indication, in which a warning light would go on for 12 seconds even if there was no fault.

The military pilot – who is not being named for security reasons – said pilots were circulated with information warning them about the problem after it emerged.

He also told of concerns with the automatic flight control system, which prompted a message to pilots telling them to avoid cruising below 300ft for prolonged periods unless "operationally essential".

The pilot told the inquiry that the Chinook was subject to two restrictions which limited the way it could be flown.

These meant that the helicopter had to fly under visual rules – an anti-icing stipulation meant it could not fly in air temperatures below 4C.

This meant it could not be flown at high level, on its route from RAF Aldergrove to Fort George in the north of Scotland.

It also carried a weight restriction, which cut the amount of fuel it could carry – enough for two hours' flight – thus giving it fewer diversion options in unforeseen circumstances.

Flying by instruments, a minimum safe altitude would be set for the trip, calculated by finding the height of the tallest terrain and adding a safety margin.

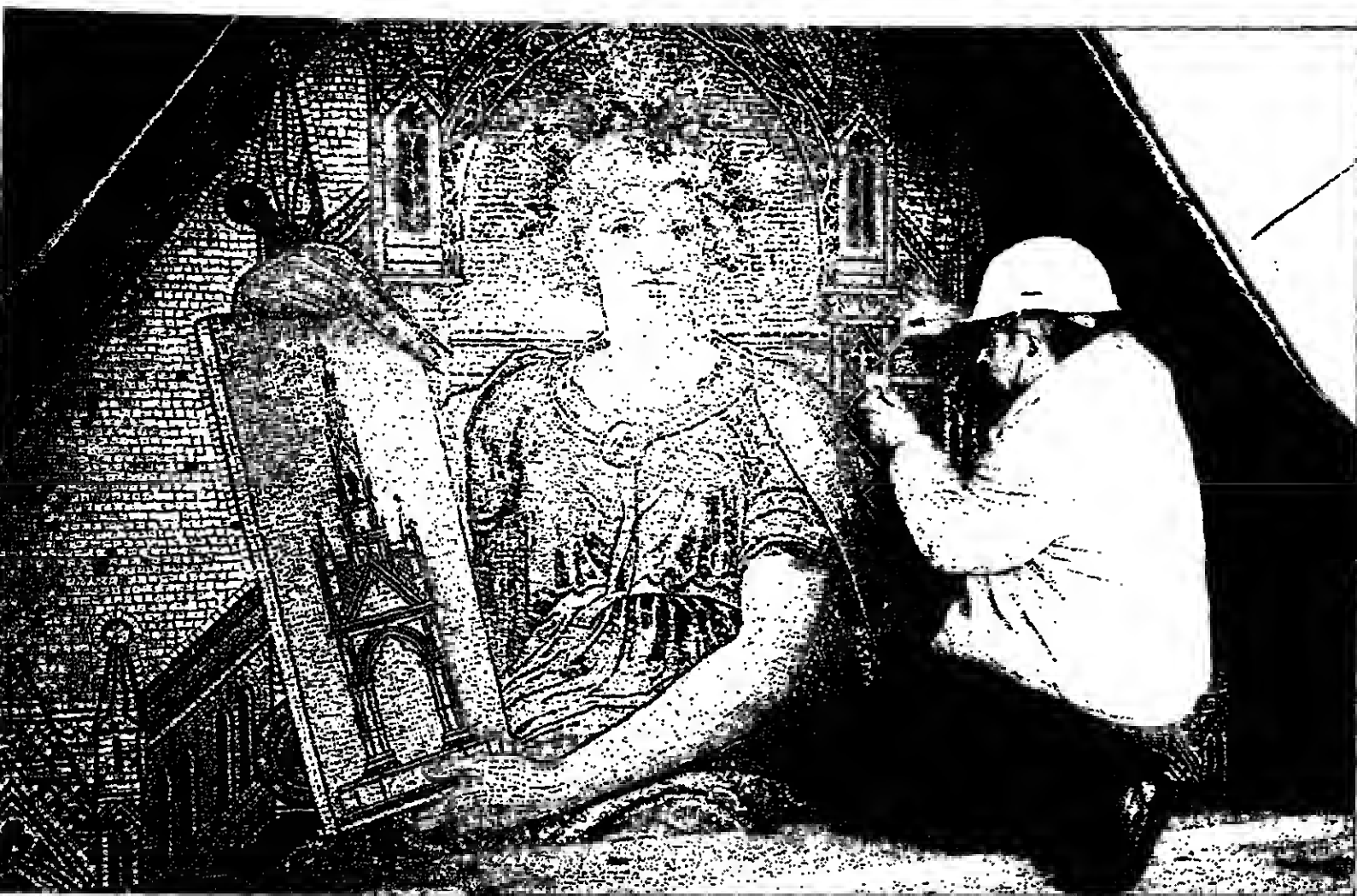
Flying visually involved keeping in sight of the ground, and

not breaking the 4C icing limit. The aircraft was not equipped with radar, the inquiry was told.

The pilot said that, if faced with unexpected cloud, the options would have included returning to Aldergrove, climbing to the maximum height permitted by the 4C margin, or attempting to follow the coastline around the Mull of Kintyre.

The hearing continues.

## Mosaic 'doctor' orders treatment for Albert



Bedside manner: Cavaliere Giovanni Cucco uses a stethoscope to check mosaics on the Albert Memorial, in west London. Photograph: Nick Turpin

JOHN MCKIE

One of the world's leading mosaic experts has brought his individual working methods to bear on the work on the Albert Memorial, in west London.

Cavaliere Giovanni Cucco,

the chief mosaicist at St Mark's Basilica, in Venice, yesterday deployed his stethoscope and a tuning fork as part of the £14m restoration work being carried out by English Heritage.

He said: "The way I examine the mosaics is like a doctor lis-

tening to the heartbeat of a patient. In parts, the condition of the mosaics is *molto malata* – extremely ill. They have suffered badly from rainwater penetration over the last century.

"After the initial examination this week we are hoping that

fewer sections of the mosaic will need to be removed than we originally feared."

The restoration is only the latest stage in the process of repairing the memorial. Built by Sir George Gilbert Scott to commemorate Prince Albert, it

was unveiled in 1876 and serious repairs on the mosaics were last carried out in 1904. The main problem is that the iron core of the memorial, which is 70 to 100ft tall, has rusted. The renovations are scheduled for completion in 1999.

## Lilley rejects advice to halt Asylum Bill

HEATHER MILLS  
Home Affairs Correspondent

The Government is to press ahead with controversial plans to withdraw benefits from thousands of asylum seekers, despite warnings from its advisory body that the plans are "racially divisive" and should be dropped.

Ministers have headed off a threatened revolt by reprieving 13,000 would-be refugees who would have immediately been stripped of their benefits. It has also promised local authorities, which must take on new responsibilities for asylum seekers and their families, extra cash.

Two Tory-led London boroughs had been planning an embarrassing challenge to the proposals in the High Court. Yesterday, refugee groups accused Peter Lilley, the Secretary of State for Social Security, of performing a "cynical manoeuvre" to head off rebellion from within his own ranks.

Claude Moraes, director of the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants, said there will be daily "destruction".

Jan Shaw, refugee officer for Amnesty International said: "This malicious and mean Act will do nothing to end the hardship for asylum seekers."

Under the revised plans, after 5 February new refugees will be denied any benefit unless they seek asylum the moment they enter the country. Those whose claim is refused will no longer qualify for benefits while they appeal.

In a withering report, the Social Security Advisory Committee said: "The reality of the

proposals is that thousands of men, women and children will be left with no means of providing themselves with food or shelter. Many will have no option but to live on the streets of our major cities and ports."

"Health professionals have warned that, given the vulnerability of many asylum seekers due to their already precarious physical or mental health, some may die."

While accepting ministers' concerns about taxpayers having to pay to support bogus asylum seekers, the 14-strong committee, chaired by Sir Thomas Boyd-Carpenter, concluded: "We do not believe that it is acceptable that a solution should be sought by putting at risk of destitution many people who are genuine-

ly seeking refuge in this country, amongst whom may be some of the most vulnerable and defenceless in our society."

In the Commons yesterday Mr Lilley insisted the new rules were "fair and necessary". He said that over 90 per cent of those claiming asylum were found to be bogus – and of the vast majority who appealed only 4 per cent were successful.

"No responsible government could ignore this growing misuse of taxpayers' money," he said, claiming that the changes would save £200m a year, discourage unfounded claims and speed up genuine cases.

The committee questioned the Government's figures, suggesting the new administrative costs, coupled with the new charges to local authorities, would erode those savings.

Under the Children Act, councils will have to provide for refugee children and still have to house would-be refugees until new housing legislation comes into force next September.

In the Commons, Keith Bradley, for Labour, said the expected £200m savings would be "offset by the appalling additional cost to local authorities of, for example, having to take children into care."

The Tory MP and former Cabinet minister Peter Brooke said he was worried that the cost of dealing with asylum seekers could be passed on to local authorities. "Nothing could do more harm in terms of relations between the host community and asylum seekers if the cost is simply transferred to council taxpayers," he said.



Peter Lilley: Warned Act will be 'racially divisive'

## Mother in chains to sue

HEATHER MILLS  
Home Affairs Correspondent

The pregnant Holloway prisoner shackled during stages of her labour is to sue Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, for negligence and lack of care, in an attempt to outlaw the controversial policy.

The woman, known only as Annette, is determined to take the case all the way to the European Courts if necessary. With the support of a wide range of maternity and civil rights groups who say the practice endangers mothers and their babies, she will allege Mr Howard breached article 3 of

the Convention on Human Rights, and subjected her to "cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment".

Annette, serving a sentence for theft, was one of several women at Holloway prison who have been shackled and chained during hospital visits. Some are said to have been chained to male officers during ante-natal checks, and others – like Annette – in the early stages of, and immediately after, labour.

Yesterday, it was alleged that at least three other women, all seriously ill, had been shackled when they went to hospital for treatment. They included a woman receiving chemotherapy

for cancer, a woman suffering pneumonia and another with dysentery.

The practice of handcuffing and chaining everybody – regardless of the severity of their offence or the risk of escape – has been defended by Anne Widdicombe, the Prisons Minister, in the Commons, and by Mr Howard yesterday.

Beverley Lawrence-Beech, of the Association of Improvement of Maternity Services, which is supporting Annette's case, yesterday described the policy, which has meant women are chained in front of their children and at care and custody hearings as "barbaric".

The policy was introduced in April last year, following the escapes from Parkhurst and Whitemoor top security jails of dangerous men, including IRA terrorists. Until then, most women prisoners – who rarely make escape attempts – had not been subjected to handcuffing and chaining.

According to Chris Tshakovsky, director of Women in Prison, the policy has led to women refusing to attend family funerals, because they did not want to be seen in chains, and one woman near the end of her sentence stopping visits to her 90-year-old mother because of the shame of wearing chains.

### DAILY POEM

#### Night Feast

By Jackie Wills

The smooth bannister's like skin  
as I feel my way downstairs with my feet  
the way a dancer learns a routine.

As the carpet levels out I turn right  
and lift a hook from the kitchen door,  
rubbing the wall then changing my mind.

This way there's only fridge light  
to frame me crouching for cold potatoes,  
mayonnaise, sagging trifle, curry.

I feel the cat's tail on my back  
then her hard head, butting my hand  
away from a bowl of herrings.

Upstairs the baby's asleep,  
weaned for six months, his mouth  
still moves on a dreamed nipple.

Jackie Wills' preoccupations in her collection *Powder Tower* (Arc), are family life, mundane, ordinary, but full of details – "ribulous and exact fictions" as Liz Lochhead has described them. Lipsticks, Silk Cut, Lego, midnight raids on the refrigerator, getting dressed-up to go to the pub: these poems are sly and skillful snapshots of the everyday. Just ahead of the announcement of the TS Eliot Prize next Monday, Jackie Wills will be reading her verse, along with her fellow short-listed poets, at the Almeida Theatre, Islington, London N1, on Sunday.

#### TICKET OFFER

The Independent, with the Poetry Book Society and the Almeida Theatre, is pleased to make an exclusive two-for-one readers' offer for the preview by the TS Eliot short-listed poets. The readings will take place at the Almeida Theatre on Sunday 14 January from 7pm.

Ticket prices are £4 or £6. To take advantage of this offer, simply call the Almeida (0171-359 4404) quoting "Independent Offer". Independent readers will also be offered discounted membership of the Poetry Book Society in Saturday's edition, and a complete set of short-listed books will be available to the first 10 applicants.

## Blood service in drive to attract young donors

LOUISE JURY

The blood service is targeting young people in an attempt to boost the numbers of new donors. A campaign in universities and colleges will encourage 18- to 24-year-olds to join the 2 million adults who already give blood. The effort comes as stocks are at a record low.

Sue Cunningham, a National Blood Authority spokeswoman, said: "When we look at the age breakdown of donors, we are conscious that we're not getting enough of the younger age group. Research on giving blood has shown that if we can encourage people to give about four times we've got them for life. There is no evidence that younger people wouldn't want to give blood."

The amount of blood collected has risen steadily over the last three years to 2,402,638 donations last year. This beat the previous record of 2,345,455 pints given in 1992 when the public responded to big appeals for supplies because of the Gulf war. But demand has also risen by 1.5 to 2 per cent a year, with a rise last year of 4 per cent on 1994, and a record peak in the month of November.

Although improvements in surgical technique mean some operations can be carried out with fewer pints of blood required, the amount of surgery is increasing. Mrs Cunningham said demand frequently rose in March when hospital trusts carried out more operations to use up budget surpluses before the end of the financial year.

The authority has had to work harder to recruit donors in recent years as employers have grown less willing to allow staff to attend sessions during work-time. "The recession has had an impact," she said.

Officials blamed the flu epidemic and the Christmas lull for a slump in collections in the last five weeks. On Monday, there were fewer than 9,000 units of blood – a unit is the treated blood from each pint donation – in transfusion centres compared with the 20,000 level they aim to have in stock.

The shortages were continuing to have a serious impact on the NHS's ability to meet hospital demands yesterday. A source said the Lancaster transfusion centre was left with no stocks of the most common blood group, O-positive, after emergency supplies were sent to two hospitals following a serious accident.

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## international

# Chechen hostage crisis: Captives used as human shields as Kremlin troops move in to encircle the 'Lone Wolves'

## Rebels and Russians in tense deadlock

HELEN WOMACK  
Moscow

Chechen rebels were reacting with increased nervousness last night as Kremlin troops in armoured personnel carriers encircled the village of Pervomayskoye, where they were holding up to 200 men, women and children as hostages on the snow-swept steppes of southern Russia.

The militants were initially hostile, threatening to shoot the hostages. But later they offered to release women and children if the army stopped its menacing manoeuvres.

Later a convoy of official cars was reported to have entered the village of Pervomayskoye, scene of the drama on the freezing plains between

the regions of Dagestan and Chechnya. This raised hopes of a negotiated settlement although the situation remained tense and complicated.

In Paris, where Boris Yeltsin was attending the requiem mass for François Mitterrand, the Kremlin leader caused press excitement by telling reporters he was ready to withdraw Russian troops from Chechnya if the rebels abandoned the use of force. But a closer reading of his words suggested this might only be a reiteration of an old Kremlin position.

"There are talks going on inside Chechnya," Mr Yeltsin said after a meeting with President Jacques Chirac. "As soon as they [the rebels] agree on not using weapons, we will withdraw our troops. Only the

police will remain to maintain public order."

Moscow and Grozny agreed at peace talks last summer that Russian troops would withdraw while Chechen militants simultaneously dismantled but the treaty was violated on both sides. The Kremlin has insisted that a Chechen surrender of arms remains the precondition for a troop pull-out. The Muslim militants, sticking to their demand for nothing less than full independence, say the Russian army, which they regard as one of occupation, must go.

Certainly events on the ground yesterday gave little cause for optimism. The army, which stopped the convoy at Pervomayskoye on Wednesday, moved in closer to the parked buses where the hostages

were sheltering from icy winds. The Chechens responded by lining the hostages up outside as a "human shield" in case the troops attacked. But after nightfall, the long-suffering prisoners were put back in the buses.

A Dagestan government spokesman, Gadzhi Arpov, said the leader of the rebel group, Salman Raduyev, was alarmed by reports that more Russian armoured vehicles were approaching the already powerful ring of troops and armour, saying the rebels would open fire if they came too close.

The Dagestan authorities propose letting the convoy into Chechnya without using force," he added. Details about the talks were scarce but Alexander Mikhailov, a general with the Russian intelligence ser-

vice, said the rebels kept changing their minds.

For more than 130 of the hostages, the ordeal has lasted since early on Tuesday, when the rebels seized a hospital in the Dagestan town of Kizlyar and held between 2,000 and 3,000 patients and staff at gunpoint. Most were released when the rebels abandoned Kizlyar on Wednesday but some 130 were dragged along for the bus ride. In Pervomayskoye, the Chechens took a further group of hostages.

Iar-Bass reported last night that four hostages had escaped. It said the Interior Ministry had said that the four, all members of the Omon special forces police, managed to run away after dark and make it to the lines of encircling Russian troops.

The hostage crisis, the second

such emergency in Russia in less than a year, is a nightmare for Mr Yeltsin who, if his health permits, is hoping to run for a second term as president this year.

In an interview with the newspaper *Moskovsky Komsomolts* yesterday, the Chechen leader, General Dzhokhar Dudayev, taunted Mr Yeltsin, saying he had ordered the raid on Kizlyar and could stage hundreds more such attacks. His son-in-law is Salman Raduyev, who is leading the present operation with about 200 other militants who call themselves the "Lone Wolves".

More than 120 people died in a similar hostage drama in the southern Russian town of Budennovsk last June and at least 23 people have been killed in the current crisis.

## Serbs spare their dead the 'disgrace' of Muslim rule

Sarajevo — Hell-bent on departure and damning their enemies, Serbs from Sarajevo dug up their dead and hurried down their houses yesterday, determined to head for the wilderness rather than submit to the rule of the Muslim-led Bosnian government.

At Vlakovo, a huge cemetery in Ilidza, west of Sarajevo, a mechanical digger worked overtime to exhume the bodies for the journey to new resting places. "That's it, slowly, slowly, a little more..." called out a grave-digger as three men heaved a disintegrating wooden coffin out of its resting place and into a new tin casket.

"His body will go but his spirit will stay here in Ilidza," Igor Mijetovic said, misty-eyed, as the body of his cousin, Obrad Popadic, a former commander of the Bosnian Serb army's Ilidza Brigade, was placed in a truck ready for transport to eastern Bosnia.

Labourers welded shut a second coffin bearing the corpse of his father, Aleksa, as the commander's widow and sister wept and wailed. Other friends and relatives handed out shots of *rakija* and smoked meat to the grave-diggers.

At another plot near by, the

Emma Daly watched families dig up their relatives before leaving Sarajevo

remains of Milan Pusara were lifted out of the old coffin and into the new; at a third, the husband and brother of Dohirinka Mihajlovic began turning the sod on her grave. Most of the bodies will go to a new purpose-built cemetery in Bosnian Serb territory. The living do not yet know where they will end up.

Dragica Sladoje waited her turn. She had come to collect her husband, Milorad. "It's much worse for me this time than the last, because at least at the funeral I saw he had a nice coffin, and this time it is just dirt," she said, tears pouring down her cheeks.

The thick yellowing clay was turned in central Sarajevo too, this time for the funeral of Mirsada Duric, a passenger killed on Wednesday evening when a rocket fired from the Serb-held suburb of Grbavica crashed into a tram. She was buried in the football field, co-opted as a war graveyard, near her husband, killed on the front line at Christmas in 1992.

Spokesmen for Nato's Implementation Force (I-For) have blamed "terrorists" for the

incident. It was the first of its kind since the Dayton plan was signed, but was characteristic of countless Serb attacks during the war. Other observers fear that Serbs determined to stop the unification of Sarajevo are trying to fan fears and scare I-For into postponing the hand-over of five Serb suburbs, including Ilidza and Grbavica, to the Bosnian government.

Momilo Krajisnik, the senior Serb negotiating with I-For, has demanded an extension until September. "Serbs in Sarajevo will not accept Muslim rule," he said, adding that those who have nowhere to go could "organise themselves and put up armed resistance to the establishment of a Muslim administration".

Back in the city, Sevko Duric said: "I lost my son and then, when I thought this damned war was over, I lost my daughter-in-law." He began to weep. His other son, Zecir, knelt by the grave, tears coursing down his face, and blamed the Serbs. I-For and his government for Mirsada's death: "The first because they are killers, the

second because they do nothing to protect us and the third because they let the trams run 100 metres from the front line."

Smoke billowed across that line yesterday, as Serbs from Grbavica began to burn down their houses. "It's better that no one should have the house — no Muslim will get it," Dragan said with bitter satisfaction, as smoke billowed from his square, red-tiled home on a front-line street.

"We are all going to leave, and the houses will go with us," Dragan said. A crash of tiles: the roof of a second burning house caved in. "I was born in that house," Slobodan said, while it was still standing. "We used to sledge down this hill as children. But now we have to go."

The men have packed their possessions and sent them along the mountain road to Pale, the Bosnian Serbs' capital, for safe-keeping with friends. The road to Pale is jammed with lorries, hearses and overloaded cars.

Their families will follow them in a week or so. Nebojsa picked his way through the broken glass and piles of old clothes in his shell-shattered house. "I will burn it down when I go," he said. "I don't want a Muslim to live here."



The dead go too: Bosnian Serbs digging up a coffin in Vlakovo cemetery, near Sarajevo

Photograph: Enric Marti

## 'OJ - the video' has TV in tabloid frenzy

TIM CORNWELL  
Los Angeles

A home video more than two hours long in which OJ Simpson offers his side of the story goes on sale in the US today. For \$29.95 (£19.50), murder-trial addicts are offered the real OJ in his bedroom explaining the bloody sock.

"Finally, OJ Simpson breaks his silence and responds to the American public," commercials proclaimed. Purchasers could call a free mail order number, 1-800-OJTILLS, though were warned to wait up to a month for deliveries.

The video's release sent tabloid TV shows into a frenzy. *Hard Copy*, the brashiest, started serialising excerpts, sandwiched between trailers for the film *Eye for an Eye*, in which a vengeful mother hunts down the man she believes killed her daughter and got away with it.

OJ Simpson was acquitted of the murder of his ex-wife Nicole and her friend Ronald Goldman three months ago. He pulled out of a live post-trial grilling on network television, and shelved plans for a pay-per-view show after distributors refused to handle it. The video promised a more controlled environment.

The journalist picked to interview Simpson as he toured his West Los Angeles estate was Ross Becker, a former local TV

anchorman who now owns a radio station in Kentucky. *Hard Copy* showed footage of the star rehearsing his performance with the film crew.

Gloria Allred, an attorney for Nicole's family, who have so far failed to make him testify in their civil law suit, responded bitterly. "To make a huck over the dead bodies of two innocent human beings is really repulsive and I hope that people do not help him to profit from these murders," she said.

The Simpson camp has denied media reports he collected \$3m. *Hard Copy* declined to say how much it had paid, but rival show *A Current Affair* said it was offered clips for \$600,000.

In the video, Simpson stands at the entrance of his estate where prosecutors claimed a blood trail led to his bedroom. "Once again no blood on any of the gates," he says. "If there was a bloody glove, or a hand that's dripping blood, one would think that there would be blood around."

He ridicules the idea he dropped the famous bloody glove when he ran into an air conditioner on the way home. "There ain't no way I'm going to run into an air conditioner, he says."

"I spent my whole career not running into things or people. Now suddenly I'm fumbling things, gloves and hats, and running into things!"

## IN BRIEF

### Dini offers resignation again

Rome — Italy's Prime Minister Lamberto Dini last night offered to resign for the second time in 10 days. *Andrea Giamber reports.* President Oscar Luigi Scalfaro will now have to decide whether to reject the resignation offer, as he did last month, open negotiations to form a new government — possibly led by Mr Dini — or dissolve parliament and head for general elections.

### Journalist released on bail in Nigeria

Lagos — Nigeria freed on bail Paul Adams, Lagos correspondent of the *Financial Times*. He was arrested in Ogoniland and charged with possession of seditious material. Mr Adams was released in Port Harcourt where he had been held since Thursday last week. Possession of seditious material, which could be pro-democracy leaflets, carries a penalty of up to two years' jail. *Reuters*

### Officials arrested for Mexican massacre

Mexico City — The special investigator looking into a massacre of 17 peasants last June in the southern state of Guerrero said four former government officials and 17 policemen had been arrested on murder and other charges. *Reuters*

### Politics no joke for Burmese dancers

Bangkok — Amnesty International has called on Burma's military leaders to free a dance troupe arrested four days ago after they joked publicly about Burmese politics. The eight were detained at the home of opposition leader, Aung San Suu Kyi. *AP*

### Dutch ban fur from 'inhumane' traps

The Hague — The Dutch government has banned the import of all furs from animals caught in lethal traps. Such traps are condemned by animal welfare activists as one of the most inhumane ways of snaring beaver, otter, lynx and other animals. *Reuters*

### Shuttle to attempt satellite rescue

Cape Canaveral — The space shuttle *Endeavour* blasted off on a nine-day mission to retrieve a Japanese satellite. A Japanese astronaut, Koichi Wakata, is to use the shuttle's robot arm tomorrow to snag the four-ton satellite. *Reuters*

### Tennis star's father 'demanded cash'

Stuttgart — Steffi Graf's father, Peter, demanded and got huge cash payments for the tennis star's tournament victories, a German Tennis Association official told a Baden-Württemberg state parliament panel investigating her tax affairs. *Reuters*

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JP 11/15/96



Legendary ship's final adventure in the undersea world of Jacques Cousteau



Calypso, the ship with a starring role in Jacques Cousteau's long-running television series, sank in shallow waters off Singapore after being hit by a barge. The 66ft converted British minesweeper, in which the 85-year-old French oceanographer has toured the globe since 1950, went down in 18ft of water at a shipyard where she had been berthed. Now the ship, pictured (inset) on an earlier expedition, will be refitted and retired, said the Paris-based Cousteau Society. A new Calypso II is already on the drawing board. Photograph: AFP

## Lebanon moves to enforce its will

Ein el-Helwe, Sidon — For more than a week, the Palestinians have been fleeing Ein el-Helwe camp, those with relatives in Beirut or in the south, while the Lebanese Army's 12th Brigade soldiers have taken to wearing steel helmets at their checkpoints around the camp. If Abu Mahjan does not hand himself over for justice, the Lebanese government says, then the army will have to go into Ein el-Helwe and find him. And that, as everyone in the camp agrees, would mean war.

Inside the camp, unshaven gunmen loiter in the alleyways. Some are paid by Yasser Arafat, some by Moumr Makdah, Arafat's disillusioned former commander, others by Abu Mahjan whose 800-strong *Eshat al-Ansar* (Band of Partisans) is now the most powerful Palestinian Islamic group in Ein el-Helwe. Men with pistols guard his family home although the word is that the elusive Abu Mahjan, whose real name is Ahmed al-Saadi, escaped to the northern Lebanese city of Tripoli last weekend, passing

A standoff with the leader of a powerful Palestinian group threatens to end in war, Robert Fisk reports

through the Lebanese sentries at night, dressed as a woman. Like almost every crisis in Lebanon, the hunt for Abu Mahjan is on several levels. Inspired by members of a dissident Sunni Muslim Wahabi organisation — supposedly run by the Saudi exile Osama bin Laden in Sudan — Abu Mahjan is blamed for the murder of Sheikh Nizar al-Halaby, the leader of the Sunni Muslim Habashi sect who was shot dead outside his Beirut home last August; his 12-year old son and a bodyguard were wounded in the same attack. Five members of Abu Mahjan's "Partisans" were later arrested by the Lebanese police and admitted on television that they had helped in the assassination, adding thoughtfully that they would kill the Sheikh all over again for his "apostasy" in the unlikely event that he returned from the dead.

The Lebanese Wahabis and

the Habashis are splinters from the Muslim groups which fought in the later years of the 1975-1990 civil war; both still receive considerable funding; the former from Saudi dissidents, the latter probably from Iran. Abu Mahjan has treated the Habashis — whose elderly Ethiopian founder, Abdullah Habashi, now lives in secret in the Beirut suburb of Treik el-Jid — to a *graffiti* war which accused them of betraying Islam. Ominously, Sheikh Saad Shaaban, the Sunni Muslim prelate who ran the most radical of all Islamist militias in northern Lebanon — and whose principal contribution to Muslim orthodoxy was the destruction of local bars and casinos — has allied himself to Abu Mahjan.

On the face of it, therefore, the Lebanese government wants to arrest a suspected murderer and prove that it can impose law and order even inside the Palestinian camps. But there are other issues involved. Sheikh Shaaban's group has now also been indicted for civil war crimes. The hunt for Abu Mahjan, therefore, may embrace a turbulent priest or two. It may also permit the army to enter Ein el-Helwe for the first time, disarming the Palestinians whom many Lebanese still blame for their civil war. And the camp stands on valuable land which still, almost half a century after the first Palestinian refugees arrived, belongs to Lebanese families who want their property returned to them. Even more to the point, the Lebanese want to show the world that they can control every square inch of their country. How can they expect the Israelis to withdraw from southern Lebanon on condition

that the Lebanese army protects Israel's northern border if that same army cannot even arrest a Palestinian gunman 15 miles south of Beirut?

Strategic issues thus lie behind the siege of Ein el-Helwe, for Syria as well as Lebanon. Up to 300 of Abu Mahjan's gunmen are believed to be wanted by the Syrian security police, some of them allegedly Syrian military deserters. In private,

Abu Mahjan's brother says that the man he army wants to try for murder will commit suicide rather than submit to arrest.

"The Lebanese want to come into our camp," one of Ein el-Helwe's Palestinian inhabitants remarked with deep cynicism. "They need to come here. But when? I don't think the government can take this decision by themselves — it is a decision that will have to be made in Damascus. I just hope that when they come, they do so peacefully. Both sides realise the dangers. A lot of people could die."

Whitewater: First Lady emerges as election liability

## Clinton battles growing storm over Hillary

RUPERT CORNWELL  
Washington

Beset by the fresh controversy swirling around his wife and a budget crisis whose resolution looks increasingly remote, President Bill Clinton yesterday launched a public counterthrust against his critics that amounts to the formal launch of his campaign for re-election this November.

Immediately after his White House press conference last night, his first such exercise since August, Mr Clinton was leaving for a fund-raising dinner in Tennessee, and thence to Bosnia, where he will visit US troops in the Balkans — just as his Republican rivals tramp the snows of Iowa and New Hampshire in search of votes in the key first primaries, now only a month away.

In doing so, the President is seeking to deflect attention from the budget impasse and especially from the travails of Mrs Clinton, accused by Republicans of failing to come clean about her involvement in the Whitewater affair and of having ordered the sacking of the White House travel office staff in 1993, a bungled enterprise which seriously damaged the image of the young Clinton administration.

Even as Mr Clinton spoke, the Whitewater inquiry was continuing on Capitol Hill with

the interrogation of Richard Massey, a junior associate of Mrs Clinton at the Rose law firm in Little Rock, Arkansas in the mid-1980s. Mr Massey's testimony, Republicans were hoping, would provide new evidence that the then Arkansas Governor's wife did far more work than she has hitherto admitted for Madison Guaranty, the savings bank owned by the Clintons' partner in the Whitewater real estate venture, and whose 1989 collapse cost American taxpayers \$60m (£38m).

One comfort, if the Senate Whitewater committee's chair, Alfonse D'Amato, was to be believed, is that the First Lady herself will not be subpoenaed to testify in person, thus sparing the White House an indignity never visited on a presidential spouse.

But there is no concealing the damage to her standing, just when the White House was counting on this week's launch of her book on children, *It Takes a Village* to burnish the image of a non-political, socially-caring First Lady.

According to a *USA Today* poll, by a margin of almost two to one Americans feel she is not telling the truth about her role in Whitewater. By 44 to 30 per cent they do not believe her claims that she did not order the 1993 dismissal of the White House travel office, to replace the staff with "our people".

Mrs Clinton herself seems to have concluded that the only way to handle the unwanted attention is to grin and bear it: "Occasionally I get a little distressed, a little sad, angry and irritated," she says in a television interview to be broadcast tonight, "but we'll keep ploughing through and trying to get to the end of this".

Her husband's advisers are not so philosophical. They fear a wife who was an asset in 1992, possibly a decisive one in helping him weather allegations of adultery that nearly destroyed his campaign, may be a liability in 1996, her very presence adding to the impression of untrustworthiness which still dogs Mr Clinton. But as White House aides ruefully point out, she is one close adviser who cannot be sacked.

Financially too, she is adding to the First Family's woes. It is Mrs Clinton, far more than her husband, who is in the eye of the Whitewater storm. If the Paula Jones sexual harassment case against her husband is included, the couple have run up an estimated \$2m in legal bills, a sum which the latest issue of *Money Magazine* says puts the Clintons "on a collision course with bankruptcy". A legal defence fund set up two years ago has raised just \$300,000. As for the proceeds from Mrs Clinton's book, they will be given to children's charities.

## US urges Syria talks

Jerusalem — The US Secretary of State, Warren Christopher, launched an effort to resume the stalled negotiations between Israel and Syria yesterday with a final round of shuttle diplomacy between Damascus and Jerusalem, writes Patrick Cockburn. Israel would like to see a summit between its Prime Minister, Shimon Peres, and President Hafez al-Assad by May. Despite intense diplomatic efforts by the US, talks near Washington have not achieved a breakthrough. President Assad is reported to have told a visiting delegation in Damascus earlier this week: "I have a day,

I have a month, I have a year and I have a generation."

Israel wants to upgrade the level of the talks with Syria to speed up negotiations. It also wants Syria to compromise on the line to which Israel would withdraw on the Golan Heights. Mr Peres has given priority to trying to achieve peace with Syria since he took over from the murdered Yitzhak Rabin in November. He has allowed the US to play a bigger role in the negotiations, which pleased Syria because Mr Assad believes that only Washington has the influence to extract concessions from Israel.

## Craxi eclipses Mafia to top Italy's hate list

The most hated person in Italy? Not the Mafia top boss Salvatore Riina, who is serving a nine life terms in prison for a series of killings. The best he could manage was third place. And not the "Monster of Florence", Pietro Pacciani, jailed for 14 murders. He was fourth. Topping the list in a survey for RAI radio was Bettino Craxi, the former prime minister. Craxi, convicted in numerous corruption cases, was considered far and away the most evil person. That may be appropriate, as Craxi himself is far and away: he is living in Tunisia, a fugitive from Italian justice.

Giulio Andreotti, the former prime minister now on trial for alleged Mafia links, came second. The next nine spots all went to politicians, with President Jacques Chirac of France coming in at No 7, a notch above President Slobodan Milosevic of Serbia.

Yasser Arafat had a question about a clause in an Israeli-Palestinian economic agreement being signed on Tuesday. The PLO leader scrawled a question mark beside the clause that allows Israel to seal off areas governed by the Palestinian Authority.

But the Israeli foreign minister, Ehud Barak, dealt easily with it. When it was his turn to sign, he simply crossed out the question mark. He later told the Israeli newspaper *Harets*: "We must protect our citizens, and we insisted that our hands

PEOPLE would be free. Arafat has a problem with that? So what. I crased the sign he wrote on the agreement."

As Francois Mitterrand was buried in the village of Jarnac yesterday, a former mayor of Gouloux was remembering him through a collection of postcards sent by Mitterrand.



William Safire: Duel role

Camille Marchand has more than 120 cards dating from early 1964 until last May, a week before Mitterrand left office.

Posted from around the world, the cards arrived virtually every time Mitterrand left France. The final one came from Berlin. "With best wishes from this last trip," he wrote.

Mitterrand's real last journey abroad, however, was to Egypt. He spent Christmas in Aswan with his mistress, Anne Pingot,

and their daughter, Mazarine, before returning to France and New Year's Eve with his wife Danielle and their two sons.

Bend a spoon via your computer and collect \$1m (£650,000) from Uri Geller. The Israeli psychic is searching world-wide for an heir, someone who can bend the utensil while it is locked in a safe in front of a camera at his London home. People with Internet access can watch the action on their computer screens. Mr Geller, who hasn't done the trick himself, says he thinks children under the age of 16 have the best chance of success.

William Safire, the *New York Times* columnist who called Hillary Clinton a "congenital liar" over her role in the complex Whitewater property deal, is grateful to President Bill Clinton for ensuring his "historic notoriety" by threatening to punch him in the nose.

Responding to the attack on Mrs Clinton on Monday, the White House press secretary, Mike McCurry, said the President would have liked to deliver "a more forceful response to the bridge of Mr Safire's nose".

That comment, Mr Safire said, "rescued from obscurity an essay that had disappeared into the Blizzard of '96". He would, he added, "be amenable to snowballs at 40 paces".

Maryann Bird

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In memoriam: Wife and mistress, kings and presidents join the French people on a day of high emotion in Paris and Jarnac



Military cadets carrying François Mitterrand's coffin to the funeral service at Jarnac yesterday

Photograph: Daniel Joubert/Reuters

## Mitterrand has his way as world mourns

MARY DEJEVSKY  
Paris  
JOANNA LEE  
Jarnac

Lashed by a biting winter wind, beneath skies heavy with rain, France yesterday said its final adieu to François Mitterrand, the president who had given the French left hope that a Socialist could not only be elected to supreme power, but exercise that power with authority.

For the first day since Mr Mitterrand's death from cancer on Monday, flags flew at half-mast throughout the country. There was a nationwide minute of silence at 11 o'clock; in Paris and other cities, and public transport came to a halt. These were the outward and official signs of a country in mourning, the few national gestures sanctioned by Mr Mitterrand in the detailed instructions that he entrusted to his executors – and for one day only.

In the small Charente town

of Jarnac, where he was born, his coffin was accompanied from the parish church of St Pierre to the graveyard by family and close friends, watched by thousands of local people and visitors standing silently in drizzle and driving wind.

In an expression of broad-mindedness and reconciliation much remarked upon, the mourners included Mitterrand's long-standing mistress, Anne Pingeot, and his illegitimate daughter, Mazarine. They walked, supporting each other, just a few steps behind the widow, Danielle, and his sons, Jean-Christophe and Gilbert.

On the way from the church, the cortege halted briefly outside the house where the future president was born, where a bouquet of roses hung over the porch. In a touching detail, stipulated by Mitterrand in his last instructions, his black tabard, Baltic, accompanied the procession.

The cemetery was opened to the public in the early afternoon, and the two wreaths, of pink roses and of violets, that Mitterrand had instructed should lie alone on the white stone family vault were soon covered with a mountain of red roses.

The intimate ceremonies in Jarnac took place at the same time as a solemn requiem Mass at Notre Dame in Paris. Celebrated by the Cardinal Archbishop of Paris, Mgr Jean-Marie Lustiger, the Mass was attended by more than 60 heads of state and government, including Boris Yeltsin, Yasser Arafat and Fidel Castro, and a host of other foreign dignitaries, French government ministers, and other political figures.

Britain sent one of the larger European delegations, being represented by the Prince of Wales and the Prime Minister, John Major; Tony Blair and Alan Beith for Labour and the Liberal Democrats, as well as the former prime ministers Edward Heath and James Callaghan.

The nearby streets and precincts of the cathedral were crammed with people, some carrying the single red rose that was the symbol of Mitterrand's 1981 election victory.

At the end of the service the sonorous cathedral bell tolled over strangely quiet streets, as VIPs scrambled into the buses waiting to transport them to a reception at the Elysée Palace.

There were memorial gatherings in places most closely associated with Mitterrand. In Chateau-Chinon among the hills and forests of the Morvan in central France, there was a mass meeting at town hall, where Mitterrand had served as mayor. Shops closed and drew their blinds at 11 o'clock.

Almost 1,000 people gathered at Solutré rock where Mr Mitterrand went walking *en famille*. At the Socialist Party headquarters in Paris's rue Solferino, party officials and workers held their own farewell, before going to Notre Dame.

But the overwhelming impression from the past four days is of the esteem in which Mitterrand was held, despite the doubts that arose in later years about his integrity, despite revelations about relations with the Vichy regime, despite the political and not just physical weakness that dogged his later years. For a president who had left office, not in disgrace to be sure, but in a distinctly muted manner, without the generous tributes that might have been accorded to a president of 14 years, the esteem expressed at his death has been lavish indeed.

Yesterday's two requiem Masses also testified in their own very different ways to the respect and even affection left by Mitterrand's memory. The personal emotion was plain for all to see.

There has been discord during the mourning: from some Gaullists who criticised Mr Chirac for his televised tribute to the late president; even among the Socialist factions some splits were clearly visible. But between Mitterrand's death on Monday and his burial, however, those political enmities and faction rivalries were drowned out by a national and popular sense of history. Political life can now resume.

## Top TV presenter's corruption plea fails

Paris — France's best known television presenter, Patrick Poivre d'Arvor, was suspended from work for "at least several months" yesterday after losing a court appeal against a conviction for corruption, writes Mary Dejevsky. The sanction, which falls short of dismissal but takes Mr Poivre d'Arvor off the screens indefinitely, was disclosed yesterday by his employer, French television's first channel (TF1).

The presenter, known universally as "PPDA" and honoured with a puppet in his image that anchors *les Guignols*, the French equivalent of *Spitting Image*, was convicted of receiving gifts of expensive suits, air tickets and foreign holidays from the election agent of the former mayor of Lyons, Michel Noir. In April he was found guilty and given a 15-month suspended prison sentence and a fine of 200,000 francs (£27,000) — a sentence upheld on appeal on Wednesday.

The two main figures in the case, Noir and his son-in-law and agent, Pierre Botton, both had their sentences increased on appeal: Noir from 15 months to 18 months imprisonment (suspended), and Botton from four to five years in prison. Noir, a Gaullist, has also been banned from holding political office for five years, which effectively ends what had been a glittering political career. Both he and Botton are now under investigation again in connection with allegations about illegal Swiss bank accounts.

But it is the fate of PPDA that has caught the public imagination and made his suspension inevitable. He did not help his case by the arguments he had used in his defence — that the value of the gifts was much lower than alleged, that accepting gifts was the norm in the French media world, and that they had not influenced his reporting.

TF1, which was widely criticised for keeping PPDA on after his initial conviction, decided to take him off the rotas for the whole week of the appeal verdict. This reportedly led to angry scenes in the newsroom when he learnt that he would not be presenting the special programmes marking François Mitterrand's death.



Poivre d'Arvor: Suspended

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# Rifkind fails to get China talking to Patten

TERESA POOLE  
Peking

Malcolm Rifkind wound up his three-day visit to Peking last night saying that both Britain and China were determined to "look forward, not back" over the question of Hong Kong. After a lengthy meeting with President Jiang Zemin, the Foreign Secretary welcomed the Chinese leader's "repeated emphasis" that China "was not going to intervene in the affairs of Hong Kong" when sovereignty reverts to the mainland next year.

Despite the more constructive atmosphere, Mr Rifkind's attempts to persuade Peking to resume contact with the Governor of Hong Kong, Chris Patten, yielded no response. Chinese leaders, as expected,

also remained determined to scrap the colony's elected Legislative Council (LegCo). The foreign ministry spokesman, Chen Jian, said: "I think this is a closed case. That is the Chinese position and that will not change."

Both Britain and China stressed that Mr Rifkind's visit had built on a steady improvement in relations over the past few months. "If we differ we are differing in a friendly way and seeking to minimise these differences rather than to maximise them," said Mr Rifkind, who described his meeting with the Chinese President as "long and substantive". Mr Jiang spoke of the "momentum" of Sino-British co-operation.

That co-operation is not, for now, extending to Mr Patten. The question of Peking resum-

ing a dialogue with the Governor was raised by Mr Rifkind in meetings with the Chinese foreign minister, Qian Qichen, and also in yesterday's 70-minute session with President Jiang. Britain, alarmed at a "battering of confidence" among Hong Kong people in recent months, is trying to persuade Peking that a renewal of contact with Mr Patten would boost morale in Hong Kong. But the Chinese side offered no encouragement. "They did not really respond," a British official admitted.

The British maintained there was still hope. Mr Rifkind said: "President Jiang emphasised the importance of dialogue. Dialogue of course means dialogue between all on the Chinese side and all on the British side who have responsibility

for these matters." Peking has refused to have any direct dealings with Mr Patten since the autumn of 1992 when he unveiled his political reform package. Mr Rifkind reiterated that "only by [Mr Patten's] full involvement can we ensure the success that we all require. I am sure the Chinese side will wish to reflect on that."

In the meantime, it is now expected that the much-delayed ninth container terminal (CT9) project will move ahead after Mr Qian told the British side that China would accept any agreement reached by the companies involved. A compromise may emerge whereby the Jardine group, which China abhors as a political ally of Mr Patten, would drop out of the CT9 consortium in return for an alternative stake in one of the

other forthcoming container terminal projects.

The Chinese played down Mr Rifkind's claim to have reached an agreement on right of abode in Hong Kong after 1997. "I think this is an exchange of views... between the two foreign ministers instead of a concrete negotiation," said Mr Chen. Mr Qian's statement that "all residents now with permanent residence status in Hong Kong will continue to have residence status after 30 June 1997" still leaves many specific questions to be settled. But there were positive signs that such negotiations could soon yield results.

China would seek a solution "realistically, flexibly, and in a relaxed manner," said Mr Chen. "This represents a political willingness."

Cabinet chosen: Comfortable victory promises no easy future for new prime minister

## Teacher to run Japan's economy

RICHARD LLOYD PARRY  
Tokyo

Ryutaro Hashimoto, 58, leader of Japan's Liberal Democratic Party, was elected Prime Minister yesterday, and unveiled his new cabinet after days spent trying to persuade colleagues to accept one of its key posts.

After the unexpected resignation last week of Tomiichi Murayama, Mr Hashimoto's accession was assured and, with the support of all three parties in the ruling coalition, he won

a comfortable majority over his nearest rival, Ichiro Ozawa, of the opposition Shinshinto (New Frontier) party.

But despite the co-operation of the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and the New Party Sakigake, the job of Finance Minister was filled only a few hours before it was due to be announced. After a farcical game of political pass-the-parcel, it landed in the lap of Wataru Kubo, the SDP secretary-general, a former teacher with no experience of government.

The cabinet fiasco is symptomatic of the problems facing Mr Hashimoto, the fourth Prime Minister since the general election of 1993 when the LDP lost its 38-year-old majority after the defection of some of its senior members. The finance portfolio, one Japan's most powerful posts, is regarded as a poisoned chalice, and at least two senior LDP members refused point blank to take stewardship of the second largest economy in the world. Apart from the general sluggishness of the economy, which hovered on the edge of recession throughout Mr Murayama's tenure, the new finance minister faces the particular problem of seven bankrupt jewel or housing loan corporations. A bail-out plan has been agreed by the coalition but it is deeply unpopular, involving the use of 685 billion yen (£4.35bn) of public money to save the jewel, which were brought to their knees after rash lending during the "bubble economy" of the 1980s. Many economists

place the blame for this with the LDP, which then enjoyed unchallenged power.

The career of the last finance minister, Masayoshi Takemura, was in effect brought to an end by his tenure of the post.

By appointing the Socialist Mr Kubo as the fall guy responsible for steering the plan through parliament, Mr Hashimoto has cunningly deflected opprobrium from his own party.

## Grey men's Elvis checks in to heartbreak hotel

Tokyo — It doesn't take much to be labelled "colourful" in Japanese public life, but by the grey standards of his fellow politicians, Ryutaro Hashimoto, 58, is a flamboyant character, writes Richard Lloyd Parry. Quite apart from his reputation as a tough negotiator and backroom deal-maker, the new Prime Minister is an accomplished photographer, a black belt in kendo (Japanese sword-fighting), a mountaineer (two Everest attempts) and, according to insistent rumour, something of a ladies' man (a bar hostess who claimed he seduced her revealed that "even after we had finished, he did not creep away like most men").

His brilliant hair, greasy smooth complexion and car-love-deep sideburns have provoked comparisons with Elvis Presley — even if he doesn't own blue suede shoes, he did once meet US trade negotiators dressed in a green leather suit. After the moribund premiership of Tomiichi Murayama, his formal endorsement as Prime Minister comes like a whiff of expensive aftershave.

Japan has been struggling to



Ryutaro Hashimoto bowing to parliamentary applause

Hashimoto. To sustain his power and fulfil his charismatic promise, he is likely to assume a much lower profile over the next few months and concentrate on the unglamorous but essential task of rallying his Liberal Democratic Party.

Mr Hashimoto is above all a political professional, unfettered by principle and fully capable of shifting his ground for practical gain. Unlike Ichiro Ozawa, leader of the opposition Shinshinto (New Frontier) party, a firm supporter of free trade and greater participation in diplomacy and peace-keeping, Mr Hashimoto has few signature policies. He is believed in favour deregulation and an opening up of Japanese markets; ironically, though, he came to prominence last year as Minister of International Trade and Industry by refusing to give in to American demands for guaranteed access to the car market.

Similarly, he gained a reputation as a nationalist when, as president of the powerful and ultra-conservative Association of War Bereaved Families, he made a controversial visit to a militarist shrine on the 50th anniversary of Japan's defeat in the Second World War. But after his election to the leadership of the LDP necessitated a more statesmanlike image, he resigned his presidency.

As the first LDP Prime Minister since 1993, when the party which had governed for 38 years lost its majority after reformers (led by Mr Ozawa) broke away, his first priority is winning an election. Hashimoto to Senior was also a cabinet minister; his son, Ryutaro, inherited his constituency and his support in the party machine, but in most respects he is considered an outsider, an arrogant flounder of the party's stern hierarchies.

He has few close LDP allies, and he is far enough to the right to cause unease among the Social Democratic Party of his predecessor, Mr Murayama, which is still indispensable to the coalition's uneasy majority. The next election must take place by summer 1997, but its exact timing is the Prime Minister's call. In the meantime, the government is still faced with migraine-inducing problems — principally, the bail-out of bankrupt housing loan companies,

and the problem of American troops on the island of Okinawa, the object of widespread resentment since the rape of a local girl last year.

He also faces a formidable opponent in the turnout Mr Ozawa, who yesterday repeated his insistence on an immediate election. A new electoral system, replacing many of the old multi-member districts with single-seat constituencies, makes the business alarmingly unpredictable. If Mr Hashimoto fails his party at election time, it is hard to imagine that he could keep his job. Elvis lives, but only for the time being.



Framed: Malcolm Rifkind snapping photographers during a trip to the Great Wall yesterday at the end of his three-day visit to China. Photograph: Greg Baker/AP

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## The latest edition of Who's Who was published yesterday. But this relic of a bygone era is no guide to who really matters in today's Britain, argues Paul Valley

What a hoot! Lenny Henry is in the 1996 edition of *Who's Who*, which came out yesterday. Of course it doesn't say Lenny Henry. It says "Henry, Lenworth (Lenny)" as if he was trying to mollify one of those stuffed shirt Anglican vicars who ban diminutives on the grave-stones in their churchyards.

It's not just what *Who's Who* rather archly refers to as a "stand-up comedian" who makes his debut. The new edition also includes Gary Lineker, though as a writer and broadcaster, since the £95 tennis-elbow inducing volume omitted to include him when he was one of

Britain's top goal scorers. And there is the weatherman Bill Giles and author Ken Follet whom it has also just discovered.

"It all reflects the changing face of modern Britain," said a spokeswoman for A&C Black, who has published the annual directory of the great and the good for the past 148 years. "Sportsmen, entertainers and the media – you wouldn't have found many of those in *Who's Who* in 1945. But with the advent of the cult of celebrity, professionalism in sport and the mushrooming of the technology of mass communications it's all changing now."

Well, up to a point. Terry Venables, Sally Gunnell and Tom Jones (the popular singing artiste, aged 55) may all have found themselves gracing the pages of this testament to distinction and influence for the first time this year but don't be fooled. They are merely there to draw your attention away from the scaphim and cherubim who continue as the first and second order powers of the established British firmament.

Turn the pages and what you will find are the usual suspects: lords, lieutenants, MPs, QCs, judges, civil servants (those above Grade 3 in the

Whitehall pecking order), the higher echelons of the armed forces and those members of the established church of the rank of archdeacon and above – all these get in automatically. So do professors, but only those from Oxford and Cambridge – redbrick and glass-façade pros have to fight their way in by virtue of "their academic achievement or influence on public policy". At Oxbridge, of course, you can take that as read.

And how about those who don't get in by *droit de seigneur*? Names are put forward by a team of editors who scour the newspapers every day

and, aided by a number of advisers in the various professions, make recommendations to a selection panel who report to the editor.

So who is the editor? "It's one of our state secrets," said the spokeswoman, explaining they were fearful of relentless lobbying. Well, how many people are there on the editorial team? "Another of our secrets, I'm afraid." As is the size of the selection panel that vets the editorial suggestions. As is the number of advisers. As is, even, the number of copies sold each year.

How discreet. But then discretion has long been one of the hallmarks of the behavioural patterns of those in Britain who are close to the centre of things. So is continuity. The questionnaire which is sent to the elect is largely unchanged from the one devised by Adam Black in the 1890s (hence its unnatural preoccupation with its subjects' clubs – which unless otherwise stated can be assumed to be in St James's).

The discretion extends to the fact that the entries are autobiographical. Thus it is possible for a subject to exclude all reference to, say, his first wife if he has now come to feel coy about her existence. Margaret Thatcher managed for some reason to name her father but omit any reference to her mother, which prompted commentators to all manner of Freudian supposition. Mrs T was hot in her denials, though her mother is once again excluded from the 1996 edition.

Our own Miles Kington, in decidedly post-modernist mood, selects as his recreation for 1996 "falsifying personal records to mystify potential biographers." Others have been more minimalist. For many years Tony Benn's entry shrank

repeatedly in size. And Ken Livingstone refused to submit an entry for many years (though this year he is in).

Some hold out still. The secretive Barclay Brothers (owners of Ellerman shipping lines and the *European* newspaper) and Tiny Rowland of Lonrho fame continue to refuse to return their questionnaires.

The length of entries, therefore, is not so much an index of the importance of the individual concerned as a reflection of their sense of self-importance. Barbara Cartland insists on listing her 600-odd titles of romantic fiction – and then submits a claim for the longest *Who's Who* entry to the *Guinness Book of Records*. The literary agent Giles Gordon, meanwhile, contents himself with pointing out that, measured in inches, his entry is the exact same length as his penis. (Two and a half inches with, worryingly, a column break in the middle.)

Power is more private than such self-publicising. The latest edition may be more detailed than the list of peers, bishops, British envoys abroad and directors of the East India Company which made up the first *Who's Who* in 1849. But it is still as reliable a map as it ever was of what Andrew Neil – who in his time as editor of the *Sunday Times* always fancied himself as the scourge of the Establishment – used to call Old Britain.

It is a world in which rank counts for more than perspicacity – why otherwise is that amiable lightweight Cristina Odone (editor of the *Catholic Herald*) included when the formidable Clifford Longley, the second most perceptive of Britain's religious commentators, is excluded. And in which the palimpsest of the past is preferred to the innovative

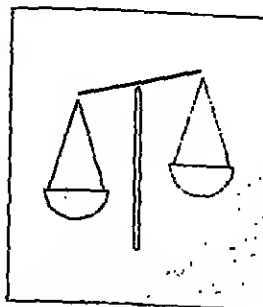
frontiers of the present – why otherwise is the aforesaid editor (with her circulation of 19,000) favoured over, say, Andy Redfern, editor of the computer weekly *PC Magazine* (circulation 122,000)?

Surely a volume which sets out to reflect "people of influence and interest in all fields" should include entries for the icons who define the cutting edge of our cultural life. Where, for example, are the names like Paul Weller, Kate Moss, Charlie Parsons or Waheed Alli?

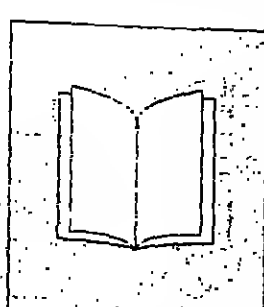
But then a *Who's Who* that reflected the vitality and variety of contemporary Britain would be a different creature entirely. The present volume is used chiefly by civil servants, the legal profession, the army – and the media who report upon them. It reflects the needs of its users who do not need to know what is exciting about modern Britain, but where power in its traditional forms is located.

The answer it reveals is that *Who's Who* still believes that power is located where it always has been. It supposes that – though the epiphenomena of contemporary culture may be different – underneath, everything remains the same. Hence *Who's Who* sees itself primarily still as a book about the powerful rather than the merely famous whom it sprinkles through only as a form of window dressing. This explains why A&C Black consistently refuses to alter its policy that once a person enters its lists they remain in the publication for the rest of their lives, even if their career is subsequently undistinguished.

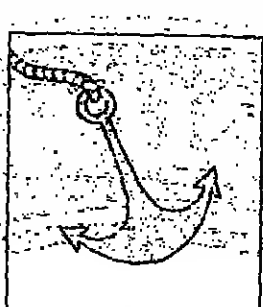
The sub-text of *Who's Who* tells us something about the abiding nature of the British Establishment. Once in, never out. Which is why they make it so hard to get in in the first place.



MICHAEL BRINDLE  
QC



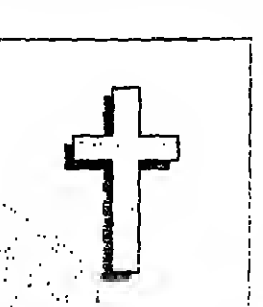
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Chief Inspector  
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JOHN BRIGSTOCKE  
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Department of Health



THE VENERABLE  
JOHN BANFIELD  
Archdeacon of Bristol

# WHO'S WHO & WHO ISN'T



PAT BARKER  
Author



ZAKI BADAWI  
Principal of Muslim  
College



NAOMI CAMPBELL  
Model



JENNIFER SAUNDERS  
Writer/comedienne



ANNIE LENNOX  
Pop singer/  
songwriter



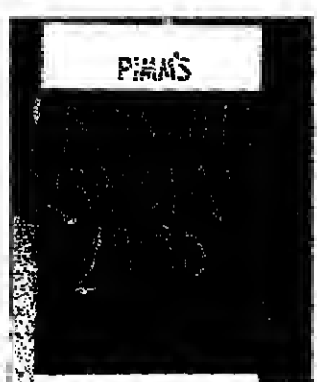
### Camelot gets streetwise

Hundreds of French people are reportedly coming over to buy National Lottery tickets. What, I wonder, do they make of the name of the company that runs our lottery? Camelot turns out to be a French word. The dictionary translates it as "cheapsack, street hawk" and, rather curiously, "news vendor". As a verb, "camelot" is even more damning: it means "to deal in or manufacture cheap street goods."

As if this wasn't bad enough, I gather that any street hawkers or news vendors as may be working for our own beloved Camelot could end up acting as counsellors to jackpot winners. I am intrigued to discover that Camelot's "winner advisers", who offer a free counselling service, are not trained professionals at all. A Camelot spokeswoman tells me that the three advisers have no qualifications in counselling – but, she adds reassuringly, they have attended the "university of life" and were "picked because of their people skills".

So what wise and soothing words should an instant millionaire expect to hear? There seems to be confusion within Camelot about this. One spokeswoman tells me that winner

advisers recommend Camelot's sole UK banker, the Royal Bank of Scotland, to winners who do not have a bank account. Later, a different spokeswoman tells me: "We don't encourage winners to bank with the Royal Bank of Scotland."



In bad taste

### Special's off

One of the long-suffering Maxwell lawyers finally lost his cool on Wednesday when he arrived at the law courts, only to discover the neighbouring restaurant, Corts, displaying the sign "Maxwell special – £11.95."

The joke, apparently, was directed against the slow speed of the trial. "The Maxwell spe-

cial was our set lunch," explains the manager. "It was an express lunch, which we thought faintly ironic, given the pace of proceedings." (The trial lasted 121 days; the jury has been out for three).

The lawyer, however, found nothing even faintly ironic about the situation. He slipped into a shop and bought a disposable camera, which he clicked furiously at the sign. Then he went to see the manager. "The Maxwell brothers would like you to remove this tasteless sign," he demanded. The manager has now complied, making it the first set lunch ever to be sub judice.

### Di's diary

The Princess of Wales is serious in her determination to keep out of the public eye, lead her own life and visit the sick and ailing. Next week, she is taking lunch at the offices of the *London Evening Standard*. At the table will be not one but two diarists, an editor and a couple more scribes. Just the sort of private, discreet occasion for a girl who wants to be alone.

### Queen Nicole

Britain is particularly blessed with accomplished classical actresses who have film experience: Helen Mirren, Fiona Shaw, Juliet Stevenson, and



Kidman Regina?

many more. So who is being sought to play Elizabeth I in a new big budget screen biopic? The Australian Hollywood starlet Nicole Kidman. There's type casting – and to add insult to injury, the film is being made by Working Title, a British company.

### Barbs fly

Is pre-election vicious wit already rearing its head? At a breakfast for captains of industry, John Major gave an over-the-top, in well-rehearsed style. "I've overlooked John Prescott. That's probably the only thing Tony Blair and I have in common."

Not a bad effort. But Eagle Eye expects the jokes to become considerably more vicious as the year goes on, and will be monitoring the inter-party sniping for further occasions when Oscar Wilde meets Quentin Tarantino.

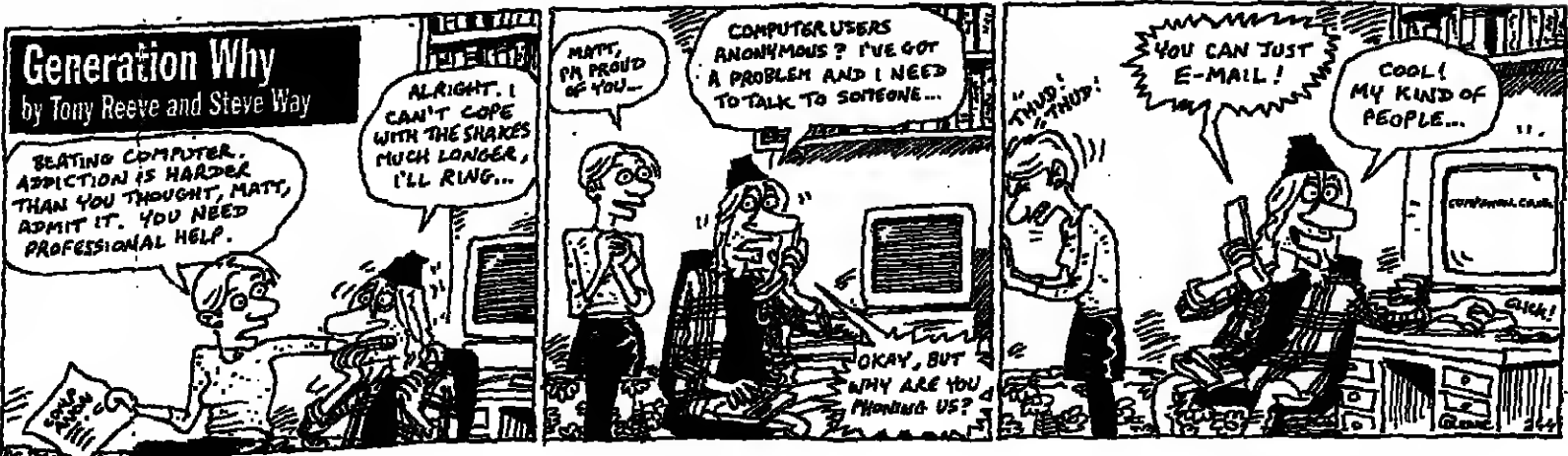
### Baring all

In its increasingly desperate bid for cash and survival the Royal Opera House has managed to entice one of its own producers. It has just released this flyer advertising next week's new run of Tippet's *The Midsummer Marriage*. As you can see, it shows a naked man and woman looking out over a cornfield.

When the opera's producer, Graham Vick, saw the image during rehearsal, eye-witnesses say he went berserk and unsuccessfully demanded its withdrawal. Any suggestion that the poster might veer towards the pornographic is bewildering to Keith Cooper, the ROH's marketing director. "Two bare bottoms," he told me definitively, "is hardly nudist."



The bottom line



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# THE INDEPENDENT

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## How far would you go, Maggie?

It is natural that any speech by Margaret Thatcher should be examined primarily for its impact upon internal party battles. These are, after all, the torrid times for the Tories. But it is also worth examining what she actually says. Her thought, informed as it is by political developments in the United States and Eastern Europe, might help her successors to define new strategies and political opportunities. So (on the evidence of this speech) does it?

Baroness Thatcher, as she herself pointed out, was speaking to commemorate the life of Keith Joseph, a genuine political radical. The title was "Liberty and Limited Government". Liberty referred to her well rehearsed aversion to further European integration, and included a quote from Kipling's "Reeds of Runnymede", an anthem for the new strain of English nationalism that can now be discerned on the right in this country.

Limited government, however, referred to a much more international debate. What is the right size for a modern state? Should it take 10 per cent (Hong Kong), 30 per cent (US), 40 per cent (UK) or more (Europe) of a nation's GDP? And if the answer is one of the lower figures, then which of its activities should the state cease or curtail?

Here her top-line at least was clear: it is time, she said, to take the cause of limited government out of the "mothballs" to which it had been consigned. A radical approach demands that the state's role be significantly reduced.

In today's Britain, such a reduction does not mean privatisation (that programme has largely been completed) or

efficiency savings (the scope for which is now limited). It means, as American politicians of both left and right recognise, radical action to cut back state provision of welfare, substituting private insurance and payment for services. This does, indeed, seem to be what the former Prime Minister had in mind. She specifically commended a pamphlet (written last November by Professor Patrick Minford, and advocating huge tax reductions, followed by cuts in the unemployment and social security budgets) as "brilliant and provocative".

But if she wills the ends, does she will the means? After all, when in power Mrs Thatcher failed to dent the social security or unemployment pay-outs, and was forced to boast just how much the state had provided for education and health. So it is worth asking which of Professor Minford's views she specifically endorses. Unfortunately, she will not tell us. "Whether Professor Minford's proposals are deemed acceptable or not, they are extremely valuable in illustrating the possibilities," is as far as she is prepared to go.

This illustrates the current problem on the right – a reluctance to specify exactly how radicalism will be paid for. It was this that undermined John Redwood's campaign for the Tory party leadership last summer, leaving him clutching a collection of eccentric objectives (saving cottage hospitals and the Royal Yacht Britannia) and improbable efficiencies. It is this that leaves John Major forced to fight the coming battle on the middle ground, against an opponent undistracted by distinguished predecessors.

## A shameful saving of money

You do not have to be a woolly-minded liberal to be concerned about Peter Lilley's plans to withdraw welfare benefits from thousands of people seeking political asylum. The Social Security Secretary's own advisers are alarmed at the prospect. They say the changes will force many genuine refugees to "risk returning to their own country, possibly to imprisonment or worse".

Sir Thomas Boyd-Carpenter, the person who wrote these comments, is neither soft-headed nor soft-hearted. He was Deputy Chief of Defence Staff, is the son of a former Tory cabinet minister and brother of Baroness (Sarah) Hogg, the recently retired head of John Major's policy unit. He is chairman of Mr Lilley's Social Security Advisory Committee, which yesterday called for the proposals to be dropped.

Sir Thomas's report highlights the Government's admission that the changes mean subsistence benefits will be denied to a substantial number of genuine asylum seekers. "Among them," he says, "will be men, women and families with children who have been unable to bring money or possessions with them, some who are sick or disabled, and some who are victims of war, harsh imprisonment or torture." Sir Thomas concludes that it is unacceptable to put these people "at risk of destitution".

These are strong words. But Mr Lilley largely ignored them yesterday when he announced essentially cosmetic amendments to his original proposals. In future, welfare support will usually be unavailable to asylum-seekers who fail to make their application as soon as they arrive. Even those who fill in the forms on time will lose their entitlement if the Home Office turns down their application. They will

have to maintain themselves (even though they cannot work) while they appeal.

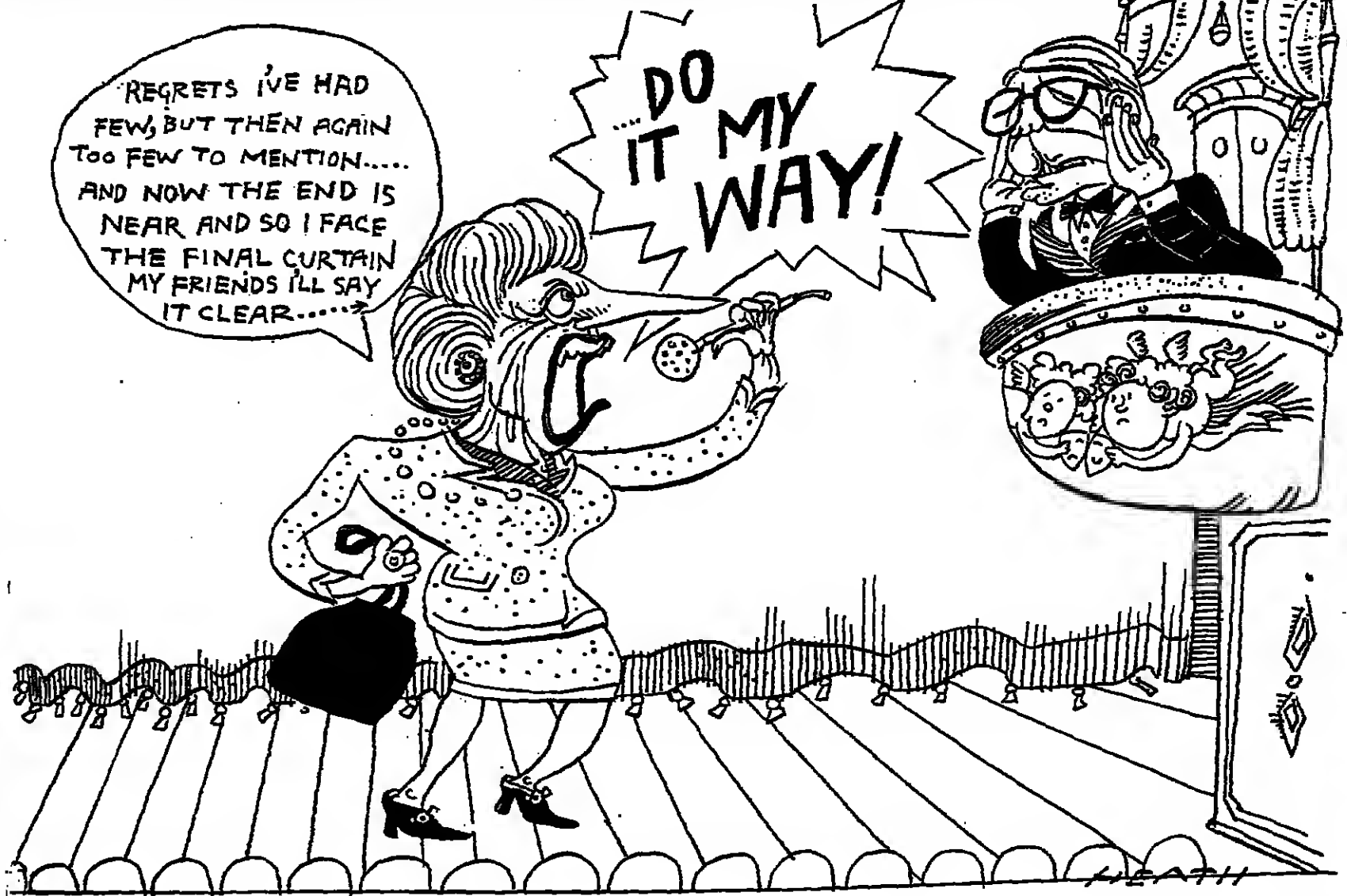
Mr Lilley made two concessions. Those applicants currently being processed will continue to receive help, until they are turned down. And Mr Lilley will underwrite the extra costs to local authorities. So Tory Westminster and Wandsworth councils will presumably drop their embarrassing court challenge to the proposals.

But these alterations will do little for future asylum-seekers, many of them, according to Sir Thomas, among "the most vulnerable and defenceless in our society". Mr Lilley's defence is that the majority of asylum applications are refused, so the tax payer is being asked to subsidise bogus refugees. He reckons his measures will save £200m, a figure that Sir Thomas says is an overestimate.

Whatever the amount, Mr Lilley is right to try to save money. But this is not the best way. The humane policy would be to reduce the huge backlog of asylum cases awaiting adjudication: typically it takes eight months to process an application and a further 10 months to hear an appeal. In 1994, 70 decisions were made on applications lodged at least seven years earlier.

Michael Howard has promised to hire more officials to process applications more quickly. They should be given a chance to deal with the backlog of more than 60,000 cases: even halving the waiting time could save millions of pounds. But people should not be driven into destitution while these officials do their job.

There is still time for Mr Lilley to think again. Whatever he might be saving, it is not worth the stain on Britain's reputation.



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### China's orphanages need help, not sensationalist criticism

From Mr Mark Abell

Sir: As the adoptive parent of a child from China, I watched the Channel 4 documentary *Return to the Dying Rooms* with some horror at the sensationalist journalism.

I am a member of a support group for parents who have adopted children from China. We have more than 30 members and are growing fast. Our group's experience of orphanages in many different parts of China is that they are staffed by caring, well-intentioned individuals working with what are sometimes meagre resources.

Conditions in some of China's orphanages may not be perfect, but to suggest that the systematic murder of children is the policy of the Chinese government, or is in some way condoned by it, is ludicrous.

The programme did not mention that the Chinese government runs a speedy, sensitive and very humane overseas adoption programme to try and ensure that as many abandoned children as possible are able to enjoy a happy, healthy life with a family. There is no "baby trade" in China. The only costs involved are the administrative costs and a donation to the orphanage.

The Chinese government has reacted negatively to the TV programme. Recent history shows

that Peking will not be coerced by pressure from overseas and that it resents what it sees as unnecessary foreign interference in domestic affairs.

If we really want to help the children in China's orphanages we should be working with the Chinese government – not against it. Yours faithfully, MARK ABELL, Northwood, Middlesex 10 January

From Dr Christopher Williams  
Sir: It is China's turn for the orphanage story. Perhaps the public will eventually realise that such horrors are not found in one, but many poor countries. The abuses happen equally to adults in institutions but the media are less interested. Visiting their orphanages in 1992, I saw that the Chinese can create well-run, humane care settings – given cash and training opportunities. A large Japanese-funded disability centre in Peking would put many establishments in the UK to shame.

So is cash the answer? No, it simply permits the poor nations to use disadvantaged children as an international begging bowl, creating a disincentive for comprehensive action. The only viable approach is through trade

not aid, but linked to human rights: "We will buy your shirts if you spend the profits on your orphanages." Sadly, among many, our government lacks the integrity to uphold this line effectively. Yours faithfully, CHRISTOPHER WILLIAMS, Global Security Programme, University of Cambridge, Cambridge 10 January

From Mr David H. W. Grubb  
Sir: Polly Toynbee is right to argue the case for those thousands of infertile couples who will now focus on female Chinese babies ("Buy a baby, save a life", 10 January), but she ignores why the problem of Chinese female orphans exists.

The core reason why so many babies are treated so badly and left to die is to be addressed. The Chinese political attitude to overpopulation has not only controlled but stimulated and regulated an existing attitude towards female babies. The vehemence of its policy is demonstrated in an equally deliberate lack of child care evident in numerous "orphanages".

A small number of babies will be fortunate enough to be adopted, but the focus of attention must be on training, educa-

tion and childcare resources, with no political or financial strings attached. Buying babies does nothing to make this happen. Yours faithfully, DAVID H. W. GRUBB, Executive Director, Feed the Children, Reading, Berkshire 11 January

From Mr Leigh Henderson  
Sir: Polly Toynbee produced a well-reasoned statement in favour of intercountry adoption. It is a shame, therefore, that she uses the cliché of describing infertile couples as "desperate". The lengthy and thorough process of obtaining approval for intercountry adoption ensures that such couples have come to terms with their infertility, have been fully informed of the issues relating to adopting a child from another cultural background and have been evaluated for their ability to meet the challenges of a transracial family. Consequently, the decision to build a family by intercountry adoption is never a spur-of-the-moment one made by desperate people. "Determined", yes; "desperate", no. Yours sincerely, LEIGH HENDERSON, Kimbolton, Cambridgeshire

### Penalising the mentally ill

From Dr Mike Launer

Sir: I am a psychiatrist who is part of a team caring for severely ill schizophrenics, both in hospital and in the community. In the past few months I have had three letters from the DSS informing me that patients had been terminated from their Disability Living Allowance benefits on the grounds that they have not been in hospital for a few years.

We are heavy users of the new medications for schizophrenia (eg clozapine), and research in the United States has shown that with clozapine, re-admissions of schizophrenics can be reduced by up to 80 per cent. It is, however, true to say that many of these patients still remain severely disabled in the community. More importantly, it is only due to the patient's own compliance and the efforts of the carers that we can achieve this degree of stability.

The Government claims to be heavily pushing care in the community for schizophrenia, but what is the point when the DSS is penalising sufferers and carers for their efforts by reducing their means to bare subsistence levels? Yours faithfully, MIKE LAUNER, Consultant Psychiatrist, Burnley Health Care Trust, Burnley, Lancashire 11 January

### Roads, codes and law

From Mr Jonathan Picken  
Sir: David Watson (letter, 10 January) is surely incorrect when implying that it is against the law to drive in the middle lane of a motorway when not overtaking.

Provisions regarding the Highway Code are now contained in the Road Traffic Act 1988. Section 38(7) of the Act provides that a failure on the part of a person to observe a provision of the Highway Code shall not of itself render that person liable to criminal proceedings of any kind but any such failure may in any proceedings... be relied upon by any party to the proceedings as tending to establish or negative any liability which is in question in those proceedings.

The unnecessary hogging of middle lanes or breaches of any of the Code's provisions may constitute evidence that a driving offence has been committed, but such acts are not in themselves illegal. Yours sincerely, JONATHAN PICKEN, Solicitor, London, SE27

### Mitterrand's model

From Ms Marie-Claude Angwin  
Sir: Why did President Mitterrand call his illegitimate daughter "Mazarine"? Was it because he saw in himself some of the attributes of Cardinal Mazarin? French statesman... elegant and subtle, simultaneously flexible and enthusiastic. (Le Grand Larousse, 1963) A brilliant administrator, though tortuous... had many enemies and critics... was a generous patron of the arts... worked consistently for the growth of French power and the consolidation of the central authority. (Everyman's Encyclopedia, 1985)

Perhaps Mitterrand was aiming too high? Yours sincerely, MARIE-CLAUDE ANGIN, London, W8

### No justification for shackling

From Ms Anita Dockley

Sir: The Howard League is appalled that ministers have rejected proposals to end the inappropriate and barbaric practice of shackling pregnant prisoners ("Prison mothers to stay in chains", 10 January). Information from prisoners themselves and eye-witnesses at the hospital have confirmed that prisoners are still cuffed, even when in the later stages of labour.

Ann Widdowcombe's defence of this policy is that women are prone to escape when escorted outside the prison even if they are pregnant. This view does not

match the reality, as the Prison Service's own figures show that only six women in the whole of England and Wales escaped from custody during 1994-95.

By any standard of civilised behaviour, the shackling of pregnant prisoners represents a cruel and degrading treatment. It may also be a practice that contravenes Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights and Article 7 of its UN equivalent, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Woolly thinking such as this is in danger of dealing a mortal blow to the Tories' election hopes and Britain's future economic prosperity. Emsu would not give cost transparency, because of individual market adaptations such as the Italian preference for top open washing machines and the British for right-hand-drive cars. Foreign exchange transactions account for less than 0.4 per cent of GDP, and anyway international companies hedge against exchange

### Speak the truth about monetary union

From Mr Adam Savill

Sir: Hugh Dykes (letter, 6 January) is right to claim that the Conservative Party's fortunes would improve if they spoke the truth about European Monetary Union. Unfortunately, his interpretation justifies Britain's participation in a fortress Europe currency on the grounds of cost transparency, saving on foreign exchange transactions and reducing wage.

Woolly thinking such as this is in danger of dealing a mortal blow to the Tories' election hopes and Britain's future economic prosperity. Emsu would not give cost transparency, because of individual market adaptations such as the Italian preference for top open washing machines and the British for right-hand-drive cars. Foreign exchange transactions account for less than 0.4 per cent of GDP, and anyway international companies hedge against exchange

rate variations to protect profits. Britain's unique economic profile of public spending, variable rate mortgages and business cycle means that it is vital to be free to set interest rates to suit our needs.

Much of Britain's economic interests lie where 60 per cent of our exports and 75 per cent of overseas investment go, outside the European Union. Mr Dykes will find that the answer to the Conservative Party's revival and Britain's future prosperity lies in combining a practical approach to the EU while maximising our interest elsewhere.

Emsu binds us to Europe when we should be looking outwards, to sell chemicals to the US, insurance to France, whisky to Japan, and let the fortress Europeans follow in our wake. Yours faithfully, ADAM SAVILL, London, SW15 6 January

### James Meade: not a bullied boy

From Mr G. H. Chesterton

Sir: Further to Richard Schofield's letter (4 January) about Professor James Meade's time at Malvern, I would like to put the record straight. Professor Meade was a boy at Malvern during the inspired headmastership of FS Preston, to whom any suggestion of bullying was anathema. Preston relied considerably for discipline on a carefully chosen body of senior boys, and James Meade was among this number. Meade won nine school prizes and an open scholarship to Oriel, hardly the achievements of a persecuted boy. Yours faithfully, G. H. CHESTERTON, Malvernian Society, Malvern College, Worcestershire 9 January

### Bearded in the Cabinet

From The Rev Tim Russ

Sir: I think your diastir (8 January) was wrong about Sidney Webb having been the last Cabinet minister to wear a beard. Tony Benn, in his diary, writes as follows: "There were jokes in Cabinet about my new beard and Michael Stewart reminded me of what Attlee had said when Sydney Silverman, MP for Nelson and Colne, grew a beard. He had said, 'I move previous face' and indeed Harold began by saying, 'Motions to move previous face are out of order.'" (p215 of the one-volume edition) That was 19 August 1969. Yours sincerely, TIM RUSS, St Dennis, Cornwall 10 January

Post letters to Letters to the Editor, and include a daytime telephone number. (Fax: 0171-293 2056; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk) Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

## Ken is and Hugh isn't. Says who?

The new edition of *Who's Who* has just been published, an event which is always greeted on BBC news bulletins as if it were another version of the honours list, instead of just a list of curricula vitae. Solemnly we were told yesterday that among the new additions to the list of distinguished people were the athlete Sally Gunnell, the actor Richard Wilson, the comedian Lenny Henry, though presumably if Sally Gunnell were that well known, we would not have to be told that she was an athlete...

But very often the interesting things about *Who's Who* are not the inclusions but the exclusions – the missing people, the missing marriages, the missing experiences. I have gone browsing through the new *Who's Who* myself, and it was not the inclusion of the actor Richard Wilson that caught my attention, it was the absence of the actor Hugh Grant. Why? Kenneth Branagh is in there, as you might expect, whom I first saw in 1982 in the West End production of *Another Country*. He was good. He was not the lead actor, though. The lead actor was Rupert Everett. Rupert Everett is not in *Who's Who*. Lenny Henry is in there all right, but not Alexei Sayle or Rik Mayall.



MILES KINGSTON

In fact, there are no Sayles at all and there is only one Mayall, namely, Professor James Bardsley Lawson Mayall, who has been Professor of International Relations at the LSE since 1991 and gives as his recreations "cooking, gardening, watching cricket, walking the dog".

That is the kind of person who makes up the backbone of the world of *Who's Who*, the professors and the major generals and the chairmen of companies and the back street politicians, all the people that you would never want to look up unless a) you had to introduce him or her for an after-dinner speech, or b) you had to know something about somebody for an article. Take Sir Christopher Bland, for example. Who is he? Had you ever heard of him? Nor I. But suddenly, there he is, the newly

elected – I am sorry, I nearly said elected – the newly appointed chairman of the BBC Governors. Why him?

As someone said to me yesterday, "Why are they picking a successor to Marmaduke Hussey now? After all, it doesn't take a giant to succeed Marmaduke Hussey, does it? Anyone could do it! Maybe the Tory government is planning ahead. Maybe if they think they are going to lose the next election, it would be helpful for them to have someone at the top of the BBC in sympathy with them, so let's install him now..."

But is Sir Christopher Bland in sympathy with the Tory establishment? Will he be their man during the long years of Labour rule to come? *Who's Who* is silent on this point. The brief Bland biography says nothing about his fortune, his politics, or his personal integrity. All it says of interest is that he was a member of the Irish Olympic fencing team in 1960, even though he seems to have no Irish connections apart from that. Mysterious. Further down the same page, incidentally, is Blandford, the Marquess of who appears from his brief biography to have led a perfectly blameless life and to have had no recreations, which I think

sums up the shortcomings of *Who's Who*. If you want another illustration of how *Who's Who* can be caught short, I might mention the case of Emma Nicholson, MR who is listed as being a life member of the Blyth Conservative Club.

There are, incidentally, four people called Michael Howard listed in *Who's Who*. Three are perfectly respectable members of society, who must get depressed at being mixed up with the other one, our oleaginous acting Home Secretary, the man who does what the Saudi Arabian government tells him to do and deport anyone who might annoy it to Dominica. This he justifies on the grounds that it safeguards British jobs, even though the only job he has ever shown the slightest interest in safeguarding is his own. Mr Howard, as is well known, never admits to being wrong about anything. It will be interesting to see if he ever owes up to being wrong about the correct way to say "Dominica", which is not pronounced "Dominecca", as he says it, but "Dominecca". If he ever gets it right, it will be the first time he has even tacitly admitted a mistake. I hope it will be recorded in *Who's Who* next time round.



## Blameless divorce helps marriages

'No-fault' does not mean no responsibility. It's a chance to review – and sometimes save a relationship

Lord Mackay, stalwart defender of the biggest reform of divorce law in 25 years, knows more than most that the season of peace and goodwill is well and truly over. This week he has faced yet another onslaught as his Bill commenced its committee stage, and none were more vehement in their opposition than the familial fundamentalists in his own party, protesting against the imposition of a two-line whip.

Lord Mackay may well be forced to extend the 12-month cooling-off period in his Bill to 18 months. But the moral zealots are unlikely to rest until they have used every parliamentary device they can to undermine the central reform principle of "no-fault" divorce.

Many of Lord Mackay's critics, such as Baroness Young in the Lords and the former education secretary John Patten MP in the House of Commons, seem hell-bent on making mischief. For them, the removal of blame from the business of divorce is tantamount to removing responsibility for relationship breakdown.

These fundamentalists see the permissive Sixties as the root cause of our contemporary problems, bringing not only the pill and sexual freedom, but also divorce and abortion law reform as well. Sometimes one wonders if they and their supporters actually accept the idea of divorce at all. They certainly seem overly obsessed with symbolic politics – the sanctity of marriage must be upheld in all cases – even if that means endangering unmarried victims of domestic violence, which was the implication of their success-

ful battle to kill off the Domestic Violence and Families Bill in the last Parliamentary session.

And this week they are in ebullient mood once again, their supporters such as William Oddie in the *Daily Mail* celebrating the fact that the Tory party, "at the last gasp, is suddenly rediscovering its identity as the party of the family and marriage". In this climate it is a bold Conservative minister who would persist in championing what Oddie calls "a piece of legislation for a throw-away age – if it doesn't work, don't fix it, dump it."

It's all a bit ironic. When Lord Mackay's Bill was first proposed, many read it as an attempt to make divorce more difficult, because it introduced the idea of a 12-month cooling-off period. Those in favour of quickie divorces said this was simply 12 months too long.

Indeed, if the Bill becomes law, Princess Diana and Prince Charles may well find themselves having to wait for a cooling-off year rather than obtaining an automatic divorce after their two-year separation. (Perhaps this explains the Queen's recent pressure for a rapid decision from the unhappy couple.)

In fact, the Bill has turned out to be a sophisticated attempt to strike a balance between the need to make the process of divorce less gladiatorial and at the same time to ensure that people really do understand the significance of their decision to part. One of the benefits of removing fault and building in a cooling-off period is that it creates a climate in which people may arrive at calmer and more collected decisions



HELEN WILKINSON

Many people use the divorce process as a cry for help

about whether the relationship has irretrievably broken down.

This is important because research consistently shows that many people use the divorce process as a cry for help or as a way of testing their relationships. In one academic study in the late Eighties, 51 per cent of divorced men and 29 per cent of divorced women would have preferred to stay married; and in 10 per cent of cases, both parties wished that they had remained married. So it seems that many people don't know whether their relationship is at an end and may be using the legal system as a way of finding out.

Soap operas have been quick to dissect these themes, with tales such as that of Patricia and Max Farnham in *Brookside*, a couple with marital problems who divorced in haste and decided to remarry the day the divorce was made final.

By actively encouraging couples to attend mediation and seek counselling during their cooling-off period, Lord Mackay's Bill compels couples to think again. It also recognises that fault and blame need to be removed from the process so that partners can come to the negotiating table not with the belligerent attitude of war-time foes but one more conducive to conflict-resolution.

It is this shift away from our fault-based system to one that rejects the whole notion of pinpointing blame that may, in the long run, be the most important. Until now we have been content to caricature the process of relationship breakdown as one of victim and perpetrator, institutionalising a divisive blame culture.

But as most of us know, real life is rarely that simple: more often than not both parties bear some responsibility for relationships gone wrong. So by removing the concept of blame in the divorce process, the Bill creates a space for both sides to face up to their own responsibilities. The break-up itself can become less acrimonious, aided by a built-in delay that encourages couples to solve their disagreements, especially over issues such as access to children, in an amicable manner.

Recent research conducted by Relate's Centre for Family Studies at Newcastle University found that mediation proved effective at resolving disagreements between couples, 80 per cent of married couples reaching some form of agreement amicably, often in the best interests of the child.

For the familial fundamentalists

such arguments fall on deaf ears. In their eyes, blame is vital to the divorce process: in their twisted logic it upholds the sanctity of marriage itself. Thus they are content to condemn those living in the real world to pain: for fault-based divorce almost always guarantees misery and conflict, and sours bad relationships even more, with obvious detrimental effects on the children of the warring parents.

This is why the Bill is an important shift in public policy, a recognition of the fact that the greatest problems arising from unstable relationships are those involving children, and that the State is bound to take a role in protecting their interests. The combination of no-fault and cooling off is the most child-friendly piece of divorce legislation that has ever been put before Parliament. But the fundamentalists seem blind to the needs of children and are left asserting an old version of state responsibility, by wanting the law to prescribe the boundaries of adult relationships and tell people how to live their lives.

How the Prime Minister handles this will be of vital importance because such issues inevitably have a wider resonance. The 1992 Republican Presidential Convention proved to be a turning point for George Bush in his bid for re-election to the US presidency. His party was shown to have been taken over by the moralistic, Christian fundamentalist Right, whose zealotry was anathema to most Americans. John Major, burnt once already by "Back to Basics", should take heed and beware the hectoring of the moralists in his own party.

## Let's hope it's not in our genes

By failing to control the use of genetic data, the Government will encourage discrimination, says Alastair Kent

Yesterday, the Government failed dismally to grasp an opportunity to prevent abuses of our rapidly developing knowledge of human genetics. By choosing to rely on existing mechanisms, which experts already regard as inadequate, the Government's official response to the report of the Science and Technology Select Committee on Human Genetics is deeply disappointing.

The news that the genetic code is being unravelled much faster than was originally thought possible must bring hope to the millions of people in families who are at risk from genetic disorders. Most of these are very rare, but together they are one of the major causes of ill health and disability in this country: more than 2.5 million people are members of families at risk from an inherited condition; 15,000 babies are born each year with significant disabilities, and almost half of all childhood deaths in Britain are the result of genetic disease.

Among the 200,000-odd genes that comprise our genetic code, we all have a few that – if we have children by a partner who carries the same defective genes – potentially produce disabling, life-threatening or even fatal conditions. As scientific understanding advances, more of the genes that increase the risk of our developing illnesses such as cancer or Alzheimer's disease are being discovered.

It is not all good news, though. Discovering the gene allows precise diagnosis, and will eventually lead to the development of new forms of therapy that will treat and perhaps even cure these conditions. But the gap between locating the gene and being able to cure the condition is a huge one. Gene therapy trials are at a very early stage, and it is not yet clear which conditions will be amenable to treatment. For the foreseeable future, the principle benefit of this new genetic knowledge will be antenatal diagnosis of affected pregnancies, giving parents the option of a termination.

Just as information about your genetic make-up gives you control over aspects of your life, so that same information in the wrong hands will give others power over you. Employers might, for example, want to know if female applicants had an increased risk of breast cancer, so they could choose not to employ them. Insurance companies might not want to provide cover for people at an increased risk of developing long-term diseases such as

Alzheimer's. People with a genetic predisposition to certain forms of heart disease might not be able to afford to protect the payments on their mortgage because of the loaded premiums demanded.

Genetics will have an impact on all our lives. Scientific advances are coming too quickly for us to assimilate. Last summer, the Commons Select Committee on Science and Technology produced a report on the implications of our new knowledge. The report was widely welcomed and many urged the Government to act quickly, implement its recommendations and introduce pow-

Scientific advances are coming too quickly for us to assimilate

erful and effective monitoring and control to prevent the abuse of genetic information.

On Wednesday, the Government rejected virtually all the recommendations in the report, preferring to rely on existing mechanisms which, in the view of the Select Committee and others, are already inadequate. The Advisory Committee on Genetic Testing which actually is to be set up has far too narrow a remit so it will, in effect, be unable to address issues relating to employment, insurance and the non-medical uses of genetic information.

Last summer, the Government deliberately excluded those with genetic predispositions from protection under the Disability Discrimination Bill then being discussed in Parliament. The Government preferred, it said, to wait for the forthcoming Select Committee report. It is, therefore, all the more disappointing that it on Wednesday it again failed to provide for proper legislation to prevent genetic discrimination in employment.

Indeed, by turning its back on legislation, the Government has gone further and created a positive incentive to discriminate early, because it will not be possible for employers, insurers or any other service provider to do so once symptoms are manifest. The Government's response on Wednesday amounts to a Discriminator's Charter.

The writer is director of the Genetic Interest Group

## Is China really so bad?



The West should not always presume to know best about other countries, argues David Bellamy

Having visited China on a number of occasions, I have seen the problems its people face and the way they have, since the Cultural Revolution, tackled the problem of sustainability. So I know that the sad stories in the media his week, of children left to die in orphanages, are only a small part of the story.

During the late Sixties, China, which has some of the world's leading botanists and agronomists, came to the conclusion that although it could feed 1 billion people, it could not go on meeting the needs of an ever-increasing population. So it instituted the controversial policy of the one-child

highlighted a related issue that stems from the culture of son preference and the inequality of the girl child. This culture is still rife in many countries which are storing up all sorts of problems for the future. It is already manifest in rural China where, in some areas, there are 28 single men (between the ages of 25 and 44) for every single woman. Little wonder that *Blind Date*-type programmes top the television charts.

Recently, an unlikely people – the Italians – emerged as a ground-breaking nation with the smallest family size, the 1.2-child family. Italy's population is now falling. The reason it was able to happen was at least in part because of a law on abortion that was passed in 1978, a law which was then looked upon as the most lenient in Europe. Four years later, legal abortion among women between the ages of 15 and 44 had risen to 19.7 per 1,000. In the next 10 years it gradually decreased to 11 per 1,000, slightly lower than in Britain.

As we approach the millennium and the world's population explodes over the 6 billion mark at the rate of 2.9 extra people every second, the real problems facing us are the following. All the world's fish stocks are being exploited to the limit and 75 per cent of them are in decline. Since peaking in 1990, world production of grain – which staples the vast majority of the world's diets and those of feedstock beef, hogs, poultry and farmed fish, and which drives the futures market – has fallen. Part of the reason is that crop varieties, new and old, are no longer responding to ever-rising levels of fertiliser application and the soil structure is collapsing, so much so that in September 1995 there were



Surveys of young people show approval of the one-child policy Richard Gordon/Colorific

only a paltry 49 days' supply left in the granaries of the world. That is dangerous living for governments that pride themselves on keeping food prices low, let alone the rising number of nations that survive on grain imports and handouts; and it has profoundly dangerous implications for the future of the world itself.

In China, the problem once again hit critical mass as the

Yellow River, which is of crucial importance for irrigation and industrialisation, dried up 610km from the sea.

When it comes to sustainability, the West has much to learn from China for, from those willow-pattern landscapes which are not particularly well endowed with top-grade agricultural soils, it has contrived to feed its 1.2 billion people adequately; its chosen

method is, of course, semi-organic agriculture.

Until recently, 14 of China's 15 largest cities had their own farm belts or *xians* which, though integrated, were kept separate from industrial and other areas. Kept fertile with treated farm and human waste, they supply most of the vegetables, grain, fruit and meat required by the cities' inhabitants, thus minimising the prob-

lems of transport, the use of non-renewables and sludge dumping.

Shanghai was not only the location for the *Dying Rooms*, it is also home to more than 14 million people. Situated at the mouth of the Chang Jiang River, soon to be tamed by the world's largest hydroelectricity scheme in the beautiful Three Gorges, in 1986 this great city was self-sufficient in vegetables and produced most of its grain, and a good part of its pork and poultry, within the *xian* administered by the city.

Shanghai needs a sludge incinerator, artificial fertiliser and the wrong type of industrial development – all on offer to China from the West – like the Chinese needed opium last time the Western world tried to take a hand in their development. Yet the single-issue vested interests of the past are there in their hordes, peddling a new opiate: sustainable development.

Sustainable development, the post-Rio battle cry, the vision of Gro Harlem Brundtland, was harpooned by the Norwegian fleets in order to get at the now protected stocks of minke whales, and is being hijacked as an excuse for getting fat-cat hands on the little that is left of the world's wild lands and the resources of sustainable ways of life.

If the Western way of life is to be the role model, why are our dole queues so long, why are the infrastructures of so many of our cities falling to pieces, why are there more black teenagers in American prisons than in American universities? And why are America's National Parks being opened up to logging, mining, cattle ranching and hotel chains? The answer is unsustainable: too many people demanding too much of the resources of one Earth.

With the Colorado River rarely making it to the Gulf of Mexico and the population of India set to catch up that of China, both in terms of numbers and in the imbalance of the male-female ratio, this is no time for complacency. Time has run out. The world must not condone infanticide, sexual discrimination of any sort, or the profligate use of non-renewable resources.

The writer is president of Population Concern

Too many people are demanding too much of the Earth's resources

family. The world wagged fingers of scorn and warned that there would be problems. There were and, sadly, the policy did not work – for today many families are having two or even three children.

However, recent surveys of students show that the majority of young people agree that one child per couple is the only way ahead, and the vast majority want to delay marriage beyond the minimum legal age. If only China had gone down the road of population concern some 25 years earlier, it could have solved the problem in a more equitable way and those youngsters could now be planning for two offspring.

Malnutrition and rural poverty are symptoms of over-population. The *Return to the Dying Rooms* TV programme

ANOTHER VIEW Shaun Hill

## Liberate diners from service charges

As the House of Lords discussed in its debate yesterday, tipping in restaurants is an anachronism – the left-overs from a period when service implied servants from the lower ranks rather than professionals, the equal of those dining. Its function nowadays is as little or nothing to do with service rendered anyway, and is in fact twofold, hiding part of the real cost of eating out, and also subsidising the wage costs incurred by the restaurant and hotel trade. Superficially this is a good arrangement for everyone except those paying.

The origins of the service charge, which Lord Bradford's Private Member's Bill seeks to abolish, lie, perversely, in previous attempts to rationalise this awkward and inconvenient business. Ten per cent, then later 15 per cent, was added to the total bill so that both diner and waiting staff should know how much was expected. In some respects it was a success but it was never "optional" in any real sense – an extra reward for extra attention – and its demise is overdue. Banning tipping is not as straightforward, however, and nobody would

want a return to the previous messy and uncertain arrangement. Should this proposal become law, the restaurant and hotel trade will still need to put its house in order if there is to be any improvement for those at the sharp end of the transaction – those with the bill.

Part of the overall problem facing restaurants is that the paying punters are uncomfortable with all this rubbish – dress codes, tipping and the like. That's why pubs now attract so many diners willing to pay sizeable amounts of money for a straightforward meal

served without fuss and without hidden extras. It is not unreasonable before eating to want some clue to the final cost of a meal. Nor is it reasonable after the meal to be confronted with any expectations other than a bit of appreciation.

Certainly, nobody wants the American system. There, you must carry around a large wad of suitably denominated notes so as to order a cup of coffee or check in luggage, or else face problems from hovering porters with fixed smiles and itchy palms.

The real cure for tipping will have

come when no tip is expected – probably at the same time as proper wages are paid to service staff. If this means a 10 to 15 per cent increase in restaurant prices then at least everyone will know where they stand. Those hovering for something extra may then be treated as the importuning beggars that they really are and the catering trade may slowly creep into the modern world. Better late than never, one supposes.

The writer is chef-patron of The Merchant House in Ludlow.

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## Thatcher 'pledged support' for Eurotunnel loans

RUSSELL HOTTEN  
and DAVID HELLIER

Baroness Thatcher, the former prime minister, was drawn into the Eurotunnel crisis last night after it emerged that some Japanese banks believe she had promised that no British government would let the project collapse.

Hopes that the UK and French governments might eventually rescue Eurotunnel may explain why the 25 Japanese banks have proved resistant to an immediate solution to the company's debt nightmare.

Senior sources involved in the restructuring talks have told the *Independent* of a letter signed by the former Prime Minister encouraging Japanese investors to support the project.

The news emerged as the governments downplayed the revelation that Eurotunnel had asked London and Paris to guarantee a bond issue to help free it of its £8bn of debts. As the *Independent* reported yesterday, Patrick Ponsolle, Eurotunnel's co-chairman, warned the French government that it faced a financial scandal unless it provided the support.

Japanese banks were initially unenthusiastic about investing in the Channel Tunnel when the government was trying to drum up support for the private sector project in the mid-1980s. A second attempt by the financial advisers to bring them

on board succeeded and, according to one French source, Lady Thatcher's views were central in persuading them. "The letter is vague, but I can see how it might have been interpreted as a promise of government support," he said.

Japanese banks have persistently claimed that they only took part in the project after receiving what they took to be, in effect, a UK government assurance that the project would not be allowed to go down. Ever since Eurotunnel announced it was suspending interest payments on its junior debt, the Japanese bankers in London have been considering whether they might have a claim against the UK government.

Yesterday one banker said that a letter from Lady Thatcher existed, although he had not seen it. "Certainly arms were twisted and many bankers working for Japanese banks in London who had turned down the opportunity to lend to the project found that their superiors were pressing them to change their mind," said one banker yesterday.

Eurotunnel's problems come at a time when most of the Japanese banks are experiencing severe problems in their domestic market. They are said to be adamant that any financial restructuring should not mean they share any more pain, and that the governments have a responsibility to help. Both the Department of Transport and 10

Downing Street said they were not aware of such a letter.

France and Britain yesterday rejected attempts by Eurotunnel to involve the two governments in a rescue. William Waldegrave, chief secretary to the Treasury, told Parliament that Eurotunnel was a private sector company and the Government would not get involved. "There is no change of policy on this matter," he said. In France, a government source said: "We respect the principle of non-intervention by the state."

However, a Eurotunnel spokesman in Paris said discussions over government support for a bond issue took place in the past few months, and they had not formally had a reply.

Bankers are deeply sceptical of Eurotunnel's chances of getting British and French government backing. A bond issue is a way out, but it could never be sold to investors without a government guarantee. "And there's no chance of this," said a transport analyst.

The Department of Transport confirmed the talks with Eurotunnel but would not give any details, saying that while finance was discussed, the details were commercially confidential.

On Wednesday Mr Ponsolle said he believed the Labour government would be more sympathetic to Eurotunnel's plight. But Alastair Darling, Labour's City spokesman, said yesterday: "Eurotunnel need not look to us to bail it out."

Fund manager expected to back Granada's bid



## MAM keeps buying Forte

Mercury Asset Management has taken its stake in Forte to over 15 per cent, following a third day of frenzied trading in the shares of the hotel and restaurant group, writes Mathew Horsman. All told, 20 million shares changed hands, as volumes in the three days since Granada's bid to £3.8m topped 100 million.

Analysts and other institutional shareholders predicted that MAM, which bought 12 million shares on Wednesday alone, would use its muscle to back Granada's hostile bid,

which could prove crucial to the television and leisure company's success.

Forte closed at 368.5p, compared with the all-cash offer from Granada of 362p. A higher cash-and-shares bid values Forte at 379p, or about £3.8m, on Granada's close last night of 664p.

Sir Rocco Forte and the Granada chairman Gerry Robinson - pictured above right with Charles Allen, reviewing the new menu they would introduce at Little Chef if their bid goes through - visited institu-

tional investors yesterday to put their final case. One fund manager said the decision was simple: "Do you think a pure hotels company will make more money for shareholders than a mixed hotels and restaurants company?" He added that his fund would make a final decision next week.

Meanwhile, the two companies traded criticisms over Forte's promise of a 20 per cent annual dividend increase in each of the next three years, and over Forte's plans to buy back £500m worth of shares.

## Ratner wants to buy back H Samuel

NIGEL COPE

Gerald Ratner, the former Ratners chairman, who was ousted after he described the company's jewellery as "total crap", has emerged as a candidate to buy back the H Samuel chain which was put up for sale yesterday.

Mr Ratner's interest in returning to his old haunts emerged as more than 1,000 high street shops were put up for sale yesterday, underlining the difficulties many retailers still face, even after an upbeat Christmas.

Sears, the sprawling retail conglomerate, led the way when it announced it was abandoning its loss-making Saxe and Curtes shoe shops, which have 230 branches between them. It is also seeking a buyer for Millets, the modestly profitable outdoor leisurewear retailer, which has 170 outlets.

Signet, the re-named Ratners business, is selling all its British stores to concentrate on its American business. Both the H Samuel business, which has 440 shops, and the more upmarket Ernest Jones chain, which has 170 branches, are being sold to reduce the company's debt mountain.

Mr Ratner is believed to be keen to buy back H Samuel though it is not clear if he could raise the finances. He is likely to face stiff competition from Goldsmiths, the small but growing jewellers, which has already offered £250m for both chains but is principally interested in Ernest Jones. Argos and possibly Littlewoods could be interested in H Samuel.

Signet needs to sell the businesses to reduce its £300m debts and realise some value for impatient shareholders. It has been prompted to sell after an improvement in the group's trading, which could force the asking price higher.

Commenting on Mr Ratner's interest, Signet's chairman, Jim McAdam, said: "If it is a serious offer, we'll look at it."

Sears, which has already sold the Freeman Hardy Willis shoe shops and Olympus Sports, has been trying to prune its disparate empire to concentrate on fewer brands. Stephen Hinchliffe, whose fast-expanding

Facia group bought Freeman Hardy Willis, is believed to be looking at the shoe shops, though the company says it has been approached by other buyers. The stores are thought to have negligible value in spite of being well known brand names.

Sears is making a provision of £30m to cover the cost of sale or closure and says the decision will save £8m a year. The company hopes to convert some of the stores to branches of Shoe Express and Shoe City which are performing well.

The City reacted positively to the news, though criticised the group for moving too slowly. John Richards, retail analyst at NatWest Securities said: "A more focused approach is developing at Sears but the trouble is it is a slow drip rather than a wholesale clear out. It's a bit like Chinese torture." He has



Gerald Ratner: seeking a return to the jewellery trade

cut his full year profit forecast from £115m to £103m.

The company is also contracting out its IT and accounting functions to the accountants Arthur Andersen. The transfer of the IT functions will affect around 900 employees.

Commenting on the trading difficulties, Sears chairman Sir Bob Reid said: "The retail environment has been increasingly difficult with low consumer demand and heavy competition. We believe that the focusing of the group on a smaller number of large brands, together with this re-structuring of our operations, will progressively increase our efficiency and the long term profitability of the group."

## Woolwich's move raises stakes for smaller rivals

NIC CICUTTI

Woolwich Building Society's move to abandon mutual status to become a bank increased the pressure yesterday on several of its larger rivals to do the same. It also dramatically raised the stakes for a number of other, smaller, societies facing the possibility of hostile takeover bids by financial institutions buying a share in the mortgage market.

At least two societies, Alliance & Leicester and Nationwide, are known to have considered floating on the Stock Exchange. Nationwide is believed to have backed away from this option, while an announcement from Alliance & Leicester is imminent.

Bradford & Bingley and Bristol & West yesterday repeated their continued backing for mutual status.

Woolwich Building Society, founded in 1847, is the third-largest in the UK, with assets of about £28bn.

The society has several subsidiaries, including insurance, in-

vestments and pensions, plus a 180-strong estate agency chain. Profits in the year to December 1994 stood at £302m.

Its decision to de-mutualise follows that of Halifax, which has merged with Leeds Permanent.

The society's chief executive, Peter Robinson, said: "Powerful forces for change are producing an intensity of competition that, through consolidation, will polarise the industry into well-defined groups of large and niche players."

"The Woolwich is not a niche player and has no intention of allowing itself to be overtaken by events. As larger groupings form in our market place, the competitive threat is obvious."

Sir Brian Jenkins, Woolwich chairman, added: "The financial services industry is changing. We need the most effective corporate structure to achieve our business objectives."

A stock market listing will, its directors believe, allow Woolwich to boost its presence in several overseas countries, finance

takeovers of other financial in-

stitutions and expand existing operations. Rob Thomas, building society analyst at the Swiss banking group UBS, said: "This move is a logical extension of what has happened to other big societies."

"Remaining ones, particularly Nationwide, will have to respond by giving back more money to their members by, say, loyalty bonuses, or giving better rates."

IFBA, the European rating agency, yesterday affirmed Woolwich's long-term rating of AA minus and its short-term A1 plus rating.

But some banking analysts questioned whether Woolwich, with a market capitalisation of about £3bn, would be big enough to attract much institutional interest.

Tim Clarke, an analyst at Panmure Gordon, said investors would do better with the much larger Halifax flotation. "It is difficult to see what Woolwich can bring to the party. I would have been more excited if it was Alliance & Leicester or Nationwide," Mr Clarke added.

## Bank answers critics over Barings

JOHN EISENHAMMER  
Financial Editor

The Bank of England has joined forces with securities regulators in the City and New York to strengthen its supervision of investment banks in response to criticisms following the collapse of Barings.

The Bank has begun joint visits of leading investment banks in London with the Securities and Futures Authority, the City watchdog. It has also begun working with the US Securities and Exchange Commission and

the New York Stock Exchange on similar visits on Wall Street.

The Bank was harshly criticised last summer by the Board of Banking Supervision following its inquiry into Barings, and was asked to make a series of improvements in its supervisory activities. In particular, the criticisms pointed out weaknesses in co-operation between the various supervisory and regulatory bodies in the securities industry.

The Bank of England yesterday issued its report to the board on the progress it has made on the 17 recommendations for improvements.

In addition to the internal improvements, Arthur Andersen, the consultants, have been brought in to look over the Bank's supervisory process.

They are due to end their review in late April or May, and will make recommendations for a comprehensive "quality assurance function".

The Bank said it had established ways of improving the exchange of information with the SFA and has already worked with it on several "live" cases.

In the past, the Bank and the SFA would liaise before and after one or other had carried out inspection visits on investment banks. The Bank is to revise its memorandum of understanding with the SFA to take account of this increased collaboration, as it will with Life, the international futures exchange, the London Metal Exchange and the London Clearing House.

The Bank said to develop a permanent framework for the exchange of information with the US regulatory bodies. The Bank has also addressed

the criticism that it had an insufficient idea of what was going on in parts of the Barings group, in this case Barings Futures Singapore, by establishing a framework for defining "significant risk" in a group. This encompasses operations outside the core bank, which the Bank of England focused on in the past. This means any geographical or product-based operation that involves more than 10 per cent of the group's regulatory capital or generates more than 5 per cent of group revenues.

## Buoyant Lonrho to demerge mining interests



Nemesis: Dieter Bock finds breaking up is easy to do

TOM STEVENSON  
City Editor

Lonrho took another giant step away from former chief executive Tiny Rowland yesterday when his successor and nemesis, Dieter Bock, confirmed the planned demerger of the conglomerate's mining operations.

Hiving off Lonrho's biggest profit-earner into a separately quoted company paves the way for a further break-up of the gold, plantations and hotels group as Mr Bock strives to realise the value of a group whose shares continue to trade

well below analysts' expectations of its net asset value.

The announcement accompanied another strong set of trading figures as the three-year recovery at Lonrho continued.

The company reported a 40 per cent rise in pre-tax profits from £108m to £151m as higher metal prices and rising hotel occupancy rates brightened the trading outlook.

Mr Rowland had always resisted calls to dismantle the far-flung empire of more than 600 trading companies in four continents he had built up over decades. The move was wel-

comed by the City yesterday, however, with Lonrho's shares closing 5.5p higher at 192.5p, three times the level at which they tumbled in 1993.

Mr Bock said: "I remain confident that there is significant further potential in our businesses. However, it is clear that the existing structure makes it difficult to ensure that the underlying value of the group's assets is properly reflected in the share price."

Attention focuses on what other steps might be in the pipeline. The company yesterday poured cold water on the

widely touted disposal of the Dutton Forsyth motor dealerships, saying it was definitely not for sale. The future of the hotels division, which includes the Princess and Metropole chains, is less certain, with a separate flotation a possibility.

Analysts said the plan showed Mr Bock, who took over the helm early last year after the ousting of Lonrho's controversial former chief executive, was serious in making Lonrho's structure more transparent.

A first step in that direction was taken last summer when Lonrho agreed to merge its plat-

inum interests with those of Gencor of South Africa to create the world's biggest platinum producer. The mining demerger would leave Lonrho's shareholders with two shares - one in the new mining group and one in Lonrho.

The mining business contributed £103m to total operating profits before central costs of £233m. Last year's contribution was £90m. Other African interests chipped in profits of £38m, sugar £39m and hotels £44m. The full-year dividend rose 10.5 per cent to 5.25p.

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## Siemens engine link with Rover

RUSSELL HOTTEN

Siemens, the German industrial giant, is to work closely with Rover Group on a new engine project in a move that appears to confirm that the car company will build a new £300m plant in the UK.

Jürgen Gehrels, Siemens' chief executive, said yesterday that his company was close to investing in a UK component facility to supply a new-generation K-series engine being built by Rover.

The car company, owned by Germany's BMW, maintained yesterday that no decision on whether to build the engine plant had been made. It was thought that Rover had also been looking at potential sites in Germany and Austria, but is now almost certain to build the plant in Birmingham. Rover is hoping to negotiate a government grant package.

Siemens would supply electronic control units and other components for the new engine. The company already supplies fuel systems to Rover, and has worked for BMW for many years.

Mr Gehrels said: "Rover have interesting plans and we want to be part of them. We will decide this year where to build our plant. Rover have already said that they want to work with us."

The petrol engine would be used in a new generation of Rover and BMW cars being developed for launch in the next century. One option being considered is for Rover to shift its diesel engine production to BMW in Germany to create more capacity in Birmingham for the K-series.

The engines will power the successors to Rover's 600 and 800 models, as well as Land Rover's four-wheel-drive vehicles and BMW's 5-series.

Siemens also said yesterday that it expected to make acquisitions in the British telecommunications sector to boost its market position in the UK.

Mr Gehrels said: "The market for information systems in the UK is worth more than £10bn a year. Clearly our position is rather weak and therefore I think further acquisitions will be necessary to strengthen our position significantly."

Siemens expected the UK market to continue growing at a rate of around 6 per cent in 1996. "As in previous years we mean to grow faster than this," Mr Gehrels said.

Last autumn Siemens bought a 75 per cent stake in Mercury Communications' private voice communications unit. It also expanded its participation in the rail maintenance market.

| STOCK MARKETS |          |              |            |              |             |           |          |                    |                     |
|---------------|----------|--------------|------------|--------------|-------------|-----------|----------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Index         | Close    | Day's change | Change (%) | 1995/96 High | 1995/96 Low | Yield (%) | Dividend | Dividend Yield (%) | Dividend Payout (%) |
| FTSE 100      | 3854.90  | -16.60       | -0.5       | 3854.90      | 3490        | 3.93      |          |                    |                     |
| FTSE 250      | 4016.30  | -24.20       | -0.6       | 4016.30      | 3630        | 3.66      |          |                    |                     |
| FTSE 350      | 1816.60  | -9.90        | -0.5       | 1816.60      | 1630        | 3.87      |          |                    |                     |
| FT Small Cap  | 1965.57  | -5.78        | -0.3       | 1965.57      | 1657        | 3.17      |          |                    |                     |
| FT All Share  | 1791.49  | -8.42        | -0.5       | 1791.49      | 1619        | 3.82      |          |                    |                     |
| New York      | 5505.70  | +472.76      | +8.4       | 5218.47      | 3832.08     | 2.32      |          |                    |                     |
| Tokyo         | 20377.92 | -234.40      | -1.1       | 20377.92     | 377.92      | 0.741     |          |                    |                     |
| Hong Kong     | 10429.82 | +126.19      | +1.2       | 10429.82     | 429.82      | 3.811     |          |                    |                     |
| Frankfurt     | 3329.51  | -8.68        | -0.4       |              |             | 1.901     |          |                    |                     |

Source: FT Information

| INTEREST RATES |         |         |         |        |        |        |        |         |         |
|----------------|---------|---------|---------|--------|--------|--------|--------|---------|---------|
| Index          | 1 Month | 3 Month | 6 Month | 1 Year | 2 Year | 3 Year | 5 Year | 10 Year | 30 Year |
| UK             | 6.56    | 6.44    | 7.20    | 8.68   | 7.64   | 6.68   |        |         |         |
| US             | 5.53    | 5.25    | 5.79    | 7.81   | 6.17   | 7.89   |        |         |         |
| Japan          | 0.38    | 0.69    | 1.71    | 4.61   |        |        |        |         |         |
| Germany        | 3.69    | 3.47    | 6.71    | 7.59   | 6.72   |        |        |         |         |

| CURRENCIES |         |         |         |        |        |        |        |         |         |
|------------|---------|---------|---------|--------|--------|--------|--------|---------|---------|
| Index      | 1 Month | 3 Month | 6 Month | 1 Year | 2 Year | 3 Year | 5 Year | 10 Year | 30 Year |
| £/\$       | 1.547   | 1.547   | 1.547   | 1.547  | 1.547  | 1.547  | 1.547  | 1.547   | 1.547   |
| £/DM       | 1.936   | 1.936   | 1.936   | 1.936  | 1.936  | 1.936  | 1.936  | 1.936   | 1.936   |
| £/¥        | 164     | 164     | 164     | 164    | 164    | 164    | 164    | 164     | 164     |

| OTHER INDICATORS |         |         |         |            |             |        |        |         |         |
|------------------|---------|---------|---------|------------|-------------|--------|--------|---------|---------|
| Index            | 1 Month | 3 Month | 6 Month | 1 Year     | 2 Year      | 3 Year | 5 Year | 10 Year | 30 Year |
| Oil Brent \$     | 18.14   | -0.36   | 16.58   | RPI        | 149.8+3.10c | 2.6    | 18 Jan |         |         |
| Gold \$          | 398.46  | -0.95   | 381.1   | GDP        | 106.6+2.10c | 4.3    | 22 Jan |         |         |
| Gold £           | 257.95  | -0.83   | 243.131 | Base Rates | -6.50pc     | 5.25   |        |         |         |



# Europe's taskmaster fails his unruly troops



COMMENT

Germany's neighbours will be forgiven a smirk at the news that the self-styled paragon of fiscal austerity is now in detention. But writing out 100 times that Germany, too, must do better won't solve the mismatch between rhetoric and reality over EMU.

Schadenfreude is the only word for it. Germany, stern taskmaster for the fiscally unruly European troops, has itself failed the test. Shock, horror: its budget deficit in 1995 was 3.6 per cent of gross domestic product, well above the threshold of 3 per cent set by the Maastricht Treaty as a condition for entry into monetary union.

After all those finger-wagging lectures from Theo Waigel, Germany's neighbours will be forgiven a smirk of pleasure at the news that the self-styled paragon of fiscal austerity is now in detention. But writing out a hundred times that Germany, too, must do better won't solve the mismatch between rhetoric and reality over EMU.

Germany's failure to comply with the EMU deficit objective in 1995 reflected a combination of lower tax revenue than expected – something that has also hit the UK – and lower growth. Both are likely to worsen in 1996, with mandated tax cuts reducing revenue and growth likely to be still lower than the 1.9 per cent chalked up in 1995.

The race to meet the Maastricht convergence criteria is proving self-defeating. The squeeze on budget deficits is pushing down growth, which in turn is halting progress on the fiscal front. The only way out is further relaxation of monetary policy. But with the German mark and linked currencies still substantially over-valued against the dollar, even a further rate cut of 0.5 per cent by the German Bundesbank seems unlikely to be enough.

Like Theo Waigel's warning last autumn about Italian inability to make the Maastricht grade, the remarks of the Bundesbank Council member, Guntram Palm, about the possibility of delay to EMU are no more than the painful truth.

The response from the European Commission to calls for delay is always to point to the mandatory start date of 1 January 1999 for those member states which the council deems to qualify. But the very clause designed to bring this about as an alternative to the earlier option of 1997 provides a potential escape clause once the political will is there to exploit it. The odds on postponement are rising all the time. Expect a concerted effort to puff up EMU in the weeks ahead – but count your spoons.

## Success not guaranteed for the Woolwich

It is only possible to be coy about an open secret for so long: the Woolwich has clearly stretched that principle to the limit, continuing to play down reports of imminent de-mutualisation as premature right up to yesterday's final confirmation. But no doubt everyone is agreed and the only real reason for waiting until the New Year to announce the conversion to plc status was the presentational importance of having it done by the new chief executive, Peter Robinson, who will lead the society through flotation.

The decision is a significant one, but hardly these days a radical one. For the big societies, the question has become more one of whether there is a case for remaining mutual than the other way round. Already 50 per cent of the assets of the building society movement either have been or are in the process of being transferred to the banking sector. Some £15bn worth of building society flotations takes place next year alone. Nationwide, which appears determined to stick it out as a big mutual for the time being at least, looks like being the exception. The Alliance and Leicester's conversion announcement is just weeks away, leaving just 30 per cent of total mortgage assets held mutually.

There are two main strands to the Woolwich's thinking. The first is that the pace of change in financial services requires a flexibility that mutual status cannot deliver, particularly in capital raising and deal-making. The second is that the mutual ideal has in any case come under strain as a result of the society's diversification into insurance and unit trusts.

Taking the plunge looks like not of itself any guarantee of success, however. As Britain's fifth largest mortgage lender, the Woolwich has a strong core business and a good brand name. But this does not alter the fact that, capitalised at around £2.5bn to £3bn, it will look small in retail banking terms, possibly too small to remain viable in a fast changing and increasingly competitive world.

If the Woolwich manages to get to flotation without being gobbled up, it will need to use the five-year takeover-protection period under building society law to make some smartish acquisitions of its own. It might even feel the need for a pre-emptive strike as it prepares for flotation. A life mutual must be on the cards, but it will probably take another big building society like Britannia or Northern Rock to demonstrate that it really means business.

## Lonrho transformation is only half complete

Lonrho is looking more and more the "normal company" that Dieter Bock set as his goal when he quietly but ruthlessly ousted Tiny Rowland last year. Such is the momentum he has created, in fact, that no sooner had the announcement been made that the mining operations were to be hived off into a separately quoted company than the market was looking ahead to the next stage in the company's renaissance.

The company is, however, wisely refusing to commit itself to any further deals, be they the widely mooted hotels flotation, a disposal of the Dutton Forshaw car dealerships or something else the market hasn't even guessed at yet. With profits on a strong upward track for at least another year, there is plainly no hurry and shareholders will be grateful that the company ignored calls, 18

months ago, to pull out of hotels, now beginning to really motor.

Even so, Mr Bock clearly needs to do more to satisfy the market's anti-conglomerate, pro-focus, mood. Most of what he has done runs in that direction, but there is plainly still a long way to go. The rump of Lonrho after the mining operations are floated off remains a disparate collection of businesses ranging from car distribution to bus assembly, textile manufacturing to retailing, construction, printing, brewing, insurance broking and oil pipelines.

That is one obstacle to be overcome. Another potential fly in the ointment is the risk that clumping all the mining assets into one separately traded entity will merely see Lonrho's shareholders exchange a discount based on distrust, for one that reflects the new company's status as a quasi-investment trust. Mr Bock claims that Lonrho's dominant shareholdings in its mining investments, and the company's management control make that unlikely, but only time will tell.

While the moves so far will have gone a long way to persuading the market that a share price of under 12p is a poor measure of underlying assets of maybe 240p, and while the political outlook in Africa is a lot more stable than even a few years ago, investors are right to be cautious. Until it is possible to say in a sentence or two what Lonrho does, the transformation will remain half complete.

# Germany 'may fail EMU budget test'

DIANE COYLE and IMRE KARACS Bonn

The future of Europe's single currency was thrown into doubt yesterday by figures showing that Germany might not meet the deadline for taking part.

The perilously feeble state of the German economy meant the gap between government spending and revenues last year was well above the target set in the Maastricht treaty. As Europe's self-appointed financial policeman, failing one of the tests for the single currency is deeply embarrassing for Germany.

The budget deficit amounted to DM123.6bn or 3.6 per cent of GDP last year. It will be difficult to bring it below the 3 per cent Maastricht target by the 1997 deadline without a dramatic change in policies, economists said. If the onset of recession meant Germany faced a struggle, then so would other countries, especially France.

Guntram Palm, a member of the Bundesbank Council, said it might be sensible to postpone the start of European Monetary

Union if too few countries met the Maastricht criteria in 1997. However, he said it would be counterproductive for Germany to call for a postponement because this could cause the mark to climb further, hitting growth and job prospects.

"This will be a make or break year for EMU. If there are no signs of life in the economy within the next month or two, the politicians can say goodbye to monetary union," said Thomas Meyer, an economist at Gold-

man Sachs in Frankfurt. Europe's biggest economy is perilously close to recession, according to yesterday's figures. The economy grew 1.9 per cent in 1995, rather than the 2.9 per cent predicted by the government, according to yesterday's preliminary full-year estimate. GDP did not increase at all in the fourth quarter and might have declined.

A recession in Germany would spill over to other European countries, including Britain. The slowdown in Britain's biggest overseas market has already caused a setback to British exports, according to figures released on Wednesday.

Günter Rexrodt, the Economics Minister, warned that the economy would have to revive for Germany to achieve the Maastricht criteria and participate in EMU. Faster growth was imperative.

Chancellor would be looking for a quick cut in rates. However, most analysts are expecting a decision to be postponed next week.

The latest picture of manufacturing production was downbeat compared with a year earlier. In the three months ending November, output rose at an annual rate of under 1 per cent, compared with the near 6 per cent increase chalked up a year before. According to official statisticians, the trend

is expecting interest rates to be lowered again.

"There is a good chance that rates may come down as early as next week," said Ian Shepherdson, UK economist at HSBC Markets. He pointed out that there was no reason why rates should not be cut two months in succession, particularly after a reduction of only a quarter point in December. With the Government's ability to run its full term of office now seriously endangered, the

decision was taken against a background of overcapacity in the industry and a record squeeze on refining margins. He blamed the situation partly on mushrooming investment in new capacity since the Gulf War and the "incessant creep of capacity brought on by technology improvements" at existing refineries.

The disposals include the closure of the Pernis unit at Rotterdam, a joint venture with Tetrao which employs around 350 people and in which BP holds a 65 per cent stake.

Plants to be sold or closed are Lima, Ohio, which employs 455, and Lavera in the South of France, which has a staff of 620. The move leaves BP with 11 principal refineries world-wide and cuts its capacity from two million to 1.4 million barrels per day – compared with the 1.8 million needed by the marketing arm.

But Mr Browne said: "The products are relatively freely available and there are a lot of people out there who are simply in the business of refining."

# BP wields \$1bn axe on refinery operations

MARY FAGAN Industrial Correspondent

BP is to sell or close three big refineries in Europe and the US, affecting up to 1,425 staff. The rationalisation, which will result in a one-off charge of \$1.1bn in the fourth quarter, is the first important move by John Browne, chief executive, since he took up the post last year.

Mr Browne said: "We believe that the refining business has undergone a fundamental change in the last few years and that only the most efficient companies can expect to make a decent return on the business."

He said BP had no plans to pull out of refining but would retain only those plants that were among the top 25 per cent most efficient in a given region.

The changes, which Mr Browne said would not affect the dividend, were largely welcomed in the City. The three plants earmarked for disposal have been loss-making for some time although BP said that the refining business as a whole was at break-even in 1995. Some an-

alysts estimate that the move will save up to £100m a year.

One analyst added: "This is a very strong signal that BP will not tolerate underperforming assets, and that for an oil company is fairly revolutionary. Mr Browne does not see refineries, he sees dollar bills."

BP's shares fell by 13.5p to 520.5p but there was a view that this could be caused by worries over the oil price and general gloomy sentiment on the sector.



John Browne: Blamed the growth of new capacity

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Deep draught from Taunton: Peter Alkens, chief executive of Matthew Clark, said he expected most of the expected £11m cost savings from December's takeover of Taunton Cider to be complete by April. The company has shed 190 jobs and closed the head office at the cider maker, but it made no contribution to half-year profits more than doubled to £15.4m. Photograph: Dillon Bryden

# Season's trading: Survey shows strong festive sales, but retailers' figures reveal a polarisation in the high street

## Mixed fortunes on high streets

## Retailers had a good Christmas, CBI says

NIGEL COPE

The polarisation of the high street was illustrated further yesterday when a number of Britain's leading retailers delivered sharply contrasting verdicts on Christmas trading.

Boots, Carpetright and Signet, the jewellery group, reported healthy sales increases. But Storehouse (BHS and Mothercare) and Sear's (Selfridges and Freemans) reported disappointing sales.

The figures follow the pattern established yesterday when Next and Dixons unveiled bumper sales increases while House of Fraser, the department store group issued a profit warning blaming the mark-down of excess stock.

John Richards, retail analyst at NatWest Securities said: "It is very clear that consumers have a very good idea of the retailers which can be relied on to deliver quality and value and those that cannot."

Sears delivered a downbeat trading statement saying group sales were down 2 per cent on a like-for-like basis in the six months to January.

Comparative sales in the shoe shops, which include Dolcis, Shoe Express, and the under-performing Saxe and Currys, were down 11 per cent. Selfridges reported sales up 12.5 per cent while Adams, the childrenswear chain, also did well. Ladieswear performed poorly.

Shares in Storehouse fell 20.5p to 300.5p when it surprised the market with flat like-for-like sales in the six weeks up to and including Christmas Eve.

At BHS, sales of womenswear and homeware did well but childrenswear performed poorly. Mothercare suffered in what the company claimed was a difficult market.

The best performance of the day came from Carpetright, Sir Phil Harris' fast expanding carpet chain. Like-for-like sales in the six months to October were 10 per cent ahead of last year's level. Sales have also exceeded forecasts over Christmas and New Year.

Boots was also positive with sales in the third quarter to December up 5.4 per cent on last year.

Boots the Chemists, which is traditionally the group's best performer, led the way with a like-for-like sales increase of 5.1 per cent. Other divisions struggled. Like-for-like sales were flat

at Halfords, down 6.4 per cent at Do it All and down 5.8 per cent at AG Stanley, the Fads and Homestyle division.

Consumers seem to have warmed to jewellery this Christmas, according to a bullish report from Signet.

Like-for-like sales for the eight weeks before Christmas were 6 per cent up on last year, a much better performance than expected.

Ernest Jones, the more up-market chain did well but H Samuel struggled and saw sales fall by 3 per cent. Sterling, the American business has also done well reporting a 10 per cent increase in pre-Christmas trading.

Analysts have now upgraded their profits forecast for the full year from around £15m to £20m.

Further evidence that shops enjoyed a strong Christmas emerged from a survey by the Confederation of British Industry which showed that retail trade was above the seasonal average for the first time since 1993, writes Paul Wallace.

According to the CBI distributive trades survey, the annual growth in the volume of retail sales in December was the strongest for two years. Retailers said they expected a similar punchy performance in January.

The highest volume increases compared with a year earlier were reported by footwear and clothing outlets followed by chemists and grocers.

However, specialist food shops and furniture and carpet retailers said that sales had

fallen in comparison with last year.

Injecting a note of caution, Alastair Eperon, chairman of the CBI's distributive trades survey panel, warned: "Last month's strong trading performance may have been partly achieved through an earlier start to sales activity reflecting intense competition among retailers. This may have encouraged consumers to hunt for bargains a month earlier than usual."

An indication of the pressure on retailers was that stock levels built up in December and remained higher than necessary in relation to expected demand. Retailers also said they were planning to run down stocks in a big way in January.

# Trafalgar homes sale triggers Beazer dispute

DAVID HELLIER

Trafalgar House, the troubled and highly indebted engineering-to-shipping conglomerate, last night became embroiled in a war of words with Beazer Homes, the construction group, over plans to sell Trafalgar's housebuilding subsidiary to a third party.

Early in the day Trafalgar said it was in talks with Persimmon, the residential group, over plans to sell its Ideal Homes housebuilding subsidiary.

Later Beazer said it was surprised by the announcement, since it had made its own inquiries about the subsidiary and been told that it was not for sale.

Beazer said it was prepared to pay a premium in excess of net asset value, that the payment would be made in cash and that the company was in a position to move quickly.

Trafalgar responded by saying it had taken into account offers and expressions of interest from a number of parties, including Beazer, but that it had granted a period of exclusivity to Persimmon.

The hoped-for sale to Persimmon, said to be at a price of £156m plus debt, forms part of Trafalgar House's objective to cut group borrowings. Net debt in the group at December was around £270m and is due to peak at around £370m during the first half of the new financial year.

Trafalgar House followers perceived the development positively, although some pointed out the adverse consequences of losing a useful stream of UK profits, which could be set against previous UK losses.

The deal, which will be partly funded by a Persimmon rights issue and additional banking facilities, is expected to be put before Persimmon shareholders by the end of January or in early February. It would make Persimmon one of the largest housebuilders in the UK, building 6,500 units a year. The deal is said to be earnings-enhancing from year one.

A Trafalgar spokesman said that to date there had been no progress on the US withdrawal. He also declined to comment on the possibility of other asset sales to cut group borrowings.

Trafalgar said it hoped to obtain a "fair price" for the Ideal Homes operations, which achieved operating profits of £19m on sales of £309m in 1994/5.

The Ideal Homes subsidiary completed 2,644 homes in the year to end-September 1995 at an average selling price of £66,120. It has 100 active sites in England and Wales and the land bank at end-September stood at 6,645 plots.

"The benefits of the acquisition will come through improved synergies, economies of scale and better margins," a Persimmon spokesman said.

Persimmon shares were trading 10p lower at 199p yesterday, while Trafalgar shares were up 1.75p to 30p.

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## IN BRIEF

### Barney's files for bankruptcy protection

NEW YORK – Barney's, the famed fashion store that in recent years has become the virtual definition of Manhattan chic and a monument to big-dollar opulence and social pretension, has filed for bankruptcy protection, it emerged yesterday, writes David Usborne. Founded 73 years ago by Barney Pressman as a cut-rate men's clothing shop, the company, still privately held, has filed a Chapter 11 petition in the New York bankruptcy court, the victim, apparently, of a too-rapid expansion programme and cash-flow problems. Barney's is believed to have stumbled, in particular, at its huge and lavishly appointed midtown store on Madison Avenue. Opened to great fanfare in 1993, it has since the less become the fashion stop of choice for New York's rich and famous. Want to see a Hollywood star? Try Barney's on Saturday. However, trade reports in recent weeks have been pointing to late payments by Barney's of bills from its suppliers. The company is also believed to owe some \$60m to Isepan Co, a Japanese retailing company with which it entered a partnership in 1989 to open two outlets in Japan. Barney's troubles came in the wake of a disastrous Christmas for American retailers, with many chains reporting minuscule growth in sales over the 1994/5 season.

### Labour calls for delay in gas competition

The Labour Party called for a delay in the introduction of competition in the domestic gas market – due to start in the South-west on 1 April – warning that it could be "an expensive shambles". Concern over the first phase has mounted since it emerged earlier this week that Ofgas, the watchdog, has appointed consultant Chris Rees of Touche Ross to see if it should be postponed. British Gas has also warned that computer and billing systems may not be ready on time and that chaos could ensue. But the Gas Consumers Council accused the company of making "contradictory and alarmist" statements and said it would resist any initiative by the company to delay competition.

### MPs to investigate Lawrence's sacking

The influential Treasury and Civil Service Select Committee is to investigate the circumstances of the firing of Michael Lawrence as chief executive of the Stock Exchange and the controversy surrounding proposals for reforming share-dealing in the City. The committee is to write to the Exchange, the Bank of England and the Treasury for written evidence.

### Goodbye to Goodison

Two more old London stockbroking names will disappear shortly when Quilter Goodison, which dates back to 1777 and is now wholly owned by Commercial Union, and Foster & Braithwaite, established in 1825 and now part of Credit Commercial de France, merge to form Quilter & Co.



## business

## THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

Edited by TOM STEVENSON

## An unusual love affair at Clark

Peter Aikens, chief executive of Matthew Clark, has done well by the shareholders who have backed him since his arrival at the drinks group in 1990. In the intervening period, the shares have outperformed the rest of the market by more than 50 per cent, even after yesterday's 2p slippage to 691p.

The stock market's love affair with Clark is unusual, as much of the growth has been fuelled by acquisition – an approach that has generally been frowned on after the excesses of the 1980s. Despite that, the strategy has been pushed into overdrive recently. Yesterday's interim figures showing pre-tax profits more than doubled from £7.19m to £15.4m in the six months to October reflected the £109m acquisition of the cider-maker Gaymer in 1994.

The first full contribution from Gaymer, which doubled the size of Clark's branded drinks side, makes the figures hard enough to interpret, but they have already been rendered obsolete by November's £271m acquisition of Taunton Cider, which doubled the size of the whole group.

The company says it is impossible to strip out the underlying performance of the acquired businesses. However, progress seems to be running ahead of plan. Savings already achieved at Gaymer, amounting to £10m, are already £1m ahead of expectations.

With some of the early benefits dropping through to the bottom line in the first half, the first contribution from its Old English to Babychem brands pushed Clark's branded drinks profits from £3.1m to £14.1m in the period.

Meanwhile, most of the £11m savings forecast from Taunton are expected to be in the bag by April.

But with close to half its sales now coming from cider, Clark may have to relinquish those gains to stay ahead in what has been a fiercely competitive market. The main threat has been in the rapidly growing value-for-money and own-label market, which represents 40 per cent of Clark's production, where the supermarket's buying power has squeezed margins.

Since last November's Budget, it has also faced the need to absorb the Chancellor's new strong cider duty on its Diamond White premium brand acquired with Taunton.

With something of a pause in acquisitions promised, Clark's strong cash flow should ensure that gearing falls from its current 50 per cent to below 20 per cent by the end of next year. Meanwhile profits of £46m this year would put the shares on a prospective multiple of 15. Fair value, while the results of the recent heady growth emerge.

## Promises kept at Carpetright

Sceptics who questioned the chunky 22 times multiple at which Sir Philip Harris's Carpetright floated in 1993 have been forced to eat their words. Sir Philip, creator of the Harris Queensway stores business, has been as good as his word. He promised to capture 15 per cent of the UK carpet retailing market in four years, a target he has nearly met in two-and-a-half years taking it to 14 per cent in the past six months. He has also more than delivered on his promise to have 200 stores open by this year and move up-market. The current total is 221 stores and Sir Phil has unveiled Premier Carpets, an in-store concession that appeals to the buyer of fitted carpets ready to spend a bit more.

Despite probably the worst market for household goods since the Second World War, the results have come through strongly. Pre-tax profits in the half-year to October, up 26 per cent to £10.1m, are well over three times what Carpetright made in the whole of 1991/2. With net cash of £24.1m, the company has had no difficulty lifting the interim dividend 41 per cent to 5.5p.

Sir Philip's skill at the bottom end of the market is vividly illustrated by these figures. A 15 per cent fall in the market, exacerbated by the hot weather, was counteracted by a series of promotions, with the hit to gross margins a mere half a per cent.

Whether he will be as successful with other formats remains to be seen, but Premier Carpets and the move into edge-of-town supermarkets under the Carpet Depot name have addressed concerns that Carpetright is running out of steam. Premier concessions should eventually spread to all MFI and Sainsbury's Homebase outlets, giving scope for 120 eventually. Meanwhile, Carpet Depot takes the group much further into large credit sales, with a potential for 70 stores.

With Carpetright now covering the market and plenty of share still to go

for, the future looks bright for Sir Phil, whose family owns 30 per cent of the shares. But even if the company produces profits of £26m this year, the shares up 15p at 439p, are high enough on a prospective multiple of 20.

## Question marks at Persimmon

Persimmon has been looking to boost its volumes for some time now and had a good look at Tarmac's housing business when it came on the market last year. The deal with Trafalgar House, therefore, comes as no surprise, even if it raises as many questions as it answers.

At an estimated price of between £150m and £175m, the acquisition of Ideal Homes is a big deal for Persimmon, which has a market value of only about £230m itself. It will put the company into the number three slot, up there with Wimpey, Beazer and Barratt, and satisfy the ambitions of its chairman, Duncan Davidson.

The acquisition's advocates will point to the continuing consolidation of the industry and trot out a batch of statistics that suggest the deal is pretty sensible. On brokers' initial estimates, earnings should be slightly enhanced in 1996 and at a plot-cost to selling-price ratio of about 22 per cent this is not a bad way of getting to 6,500 units a year with a 2.7-year land bank.

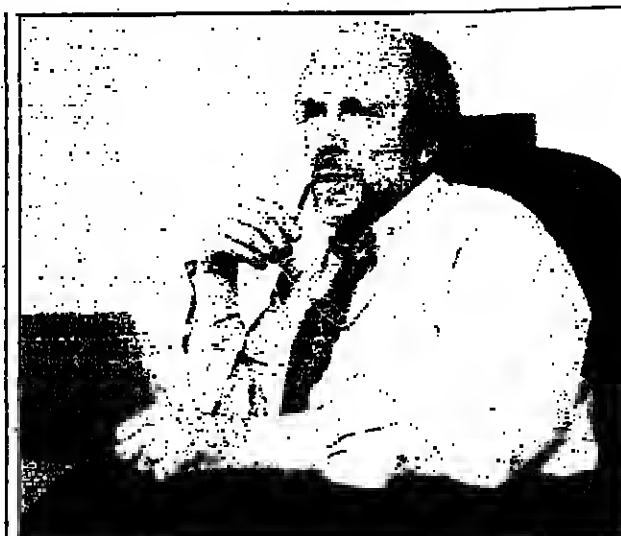
But some industry watchers worry that Mr Davidson is something of a volume junkie who will seize this opportunity to become the country's biggest house-builder even if the price to be paid is high. He engineered a big push at the end of 1994 in the hope that the market would improve last year and then found Persimmon's overhead base and the stagnant market at odds with each other.

Although the consensus is that the housing market is on the mend, the capacity of the industry to disappoint is significant. Now might well be a good time to gear up to recovery but such a strategy is not without its risks. The other worry is that with a current yield of 6 per cent on Persimmon's shares, a sizeable rights issue is an expensive way to pay. It is, however, the only option – even with this mix of cash and shares Persimmon will end up with gearing of perhaps 50 per cent.

On the basis of a pro forma profits forecast of £36m this year, the shares stand on a prospective price/earnings ratio of 14.4, cheaper than the housebuilders as a whole but more expensive than Barratt (13) and Berkeley (13.8). High enough.

## Simon Pincombe CITY DIARY

## Eyebrows rise at Pearson as Dyke pursues own goal



Signed up: Greg Dyke will make another series of Play Fair

Raised eyebrows at Pearson, where Greg Dyke, chief executive of Pearson Television, has let it be known that he is taking time off to make programmes for a rival company. The former London Weekend Television boss – who walked away with £8m when the station was taken over by Granada – is to further indulge his passion for sports by making another of his *Fair Play* series with Yorkshire Television.

The bearded media mogul, a fanatical footballer, made the first series last year, using the time off before joining Pearson to make the programmes. News of the second series has nevertheless surprised insiders, who point out that relations between Yorkshire and Pearson have not always been cordial (to say the least). Mr Dyke was Pearson's man on the Yorkshire board, where tensions were said to be more than creative. Pearson eventually sold its 14 per cent stake in Yorkshire last year.

Pearson bodes privately concede that Mr Dyke can do pretty much as he pleases. It is not as if he can threaten a man with £8m in the bank, observes one.

Is there a victor in the clash of the Titans that has been taking place at HSBC? Roger Bootle, the high-profile head of the communications giant is sponsoring the BT Global Challenge – the round-the-world yacht race – and will use the nautical metaphor to strut its stuff. Participating skippers will each be supplied with a Motorola "flare mobile" and a Motorola pager.

So farewell then Sir Nicholas Goodison. Not the man himself, you understand, rather the family name, which will be erased from the brass plates of the City in March.

In what some might regard as curious timing – the company has just scrapped its profit-related pay scheme – Julie Ramshaw, the 32-year-old vice-president at Morgan Stanley, has joined Laura Ashley as group director of merchandising (not a board position). The retail analyst is in no doubt that it is the right move. "I knew I'd go back to retailing," she chirruped. "I feel incredibly passionate about it. My heart belongs to the industry."

Investors may recall that it was Ms Ramshaw who famously tipped Next shares at about 7p when the company was on the brink of collapse a few years ago. They have since soared to over 400p.

to Keith Skeoch, the equally eminent chief economist at another HSBC subsidiary, brokers James Capel?

The outlook for the two rival teams has been a matter of much speculation since HSBC took over Midland. The gradually diminishing differences in their forecasts has only served to highlight the obvious overlap between the two departments.

HSBC plans to make a further announcement within the next fortnight. The smart money says that the whole shebang will merge.

So farewell then Sir Nicholas Goodison. Not the man himself, you understand, rather the family name, which will be erased from the brass plates of the City in March.

Alas, small comfort for sailors in distress. The "flare" function on the mobile apparently relates to its "vibrant style". The pager, on the other hand, vibrates silently to alert the skipper of an incoming message. Just what you need in a Force 10 gale.

## IN BRIEF

## Robb joins board of Unigate

Unigate, the food group, has appointed John Robb to its board as a non-executive director. Mr Robb was formerly chief executive of Wellcome, the drugs group, before the takeover by Glaxo last year. Mr Robb is also chairman of British Energy and a non-executive director of Allied Domecq and De La Rue.

## United Biscuits' sale price drops

United Biscuits has completed the sale of the frozen food part of Keebler, its US business, for a lower-than-expected figure. The American group, Windsor Foods, is paying \$45m for the company instead of the \$55m conditionally agreed. United Biscuits said the deal still represented fair value. It expects to complete the disposal of its cookie and cracker business later this month.

## Changes at Goode Durrant

Derek Kingsbury, chairman of Goode Durrant, is to hand over the reins to the chief executive, Michael Waring, who will become executive chairman from the end of next month. Alan Noble, head of the Northgate business, is to become managing director and Ron Williams, a director of Smiths Industries, is to join the board as a non-executive director. The specialist vehicle and equipment hire group also said it was expecting satisfactory progress this year as it unveiled a 49 per cent rise in pre-tax profits to £13.4m for the six months to October.

## Tough year for Cassidy Brothers

In a "very difficult" trading year, AIM-listed Cassidy Brothers saw pre-tax profits slip 3.3 per cent to £502,760 in the six months to October. The group said it had been "bedevilled with significant price increases in plastic polymer and packaging".

## Denmans seeks full listing

USM-quoted Denmans Electrical said it was looking to move up to a full listing as it released its full-year figures. A final dividend of 8p made a total of 10.2p for the full year, a 50 per cent increase. The payout came on the back of record pre-tax profits of £3.02m compared with 1994's £2.8m.

## Oxburgh appointed at Shell

Shell Transport and Trading has appointed Sir Ronald Oxburgh, rector of London's Imperial College university, a non-executive director, with effect from January 10.

## GEAC acquires 3.7% stake in MDIS

DAVID HELLIER

Shares in McDonnell Information Systems, the computer systems group, rose yesterday by 9p to 59p on news that GEAC Computer Corporation, a Canadian computer services group, had acquired a 3.7% shareholding in the company.

GEAC several years ago acquired the Canadian business of McDonnell Douglas, MDIS's former owners. MDIS was bought from McDonnell Douglas by a management team.

GEAC's decision to make a significant investment is the best bit of stock market news to happen to the beleaguered MDIS for some time.

Last month the group announced that it would not be paying a final dividend for the year. MDIS also said its year-end figures would include exceptional provisions of around

£20m as a result of the closure of some non-core operations, the cost of about 170 redundancies and other write-offs.

The board, with Ian Hay Davidson as chairman, said it was confident that revenues in the core UK and US operations will continue to grow and that the refocusing strategy would lead to reduced costs. GEAC's share purchase is the first external endorsement of that confidence.

MDIS finance director, Richard Barfield, said yesterday that GEAC had recently been involved in an unsuccessful attempt to buy MDIS's loss-making library division. He said that there had no subsequent discussions with GEAC since then.

Shares in MDIS fell from their flotation price less than two years ago of 20p to their current levels (and reached a low point of 29p) after a series of profit warnings.

|                         | Turnover £      | Pre-tax £     | EPS             | Dividend      |
|-------------------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------------|---------------|
| Carpetright (Q)         | 61.9m (44.1m)   | 10.1m (8m)    | 8.7p (6.8p)     | 5.5p (3.9p)   |
| Cassidy Brothers (Y)    | 2.13m (1.36m)   | 0.50m (0.52m) | 0.4p (0.52p)    | 0.75p (0.75p) |
| CGI Group (H)           | 156m (144m)     | 2.9m (2.7m)   | 7.47p (7.16p)   | 2.1p (2p)     |
| Domecq's Electrical (F) | 1.07m (1.42m)   | 3m (2.7m)     | 24.5p (19p)     | 10.2p (5.8p)  |
| Goode Durrant (H)       | 15.9m (14.2m)   | 13.36m (16m)  | 16.3p (16.4p)   | 2.8p (2.5p)   |
| James Stewart (H)       | 40.5m (35.0m)   | 3.73m (2.88m) | 14.32p (11.07p) | 4p (3.5p)     |
| Jarvis Hotel (H)        | 125.0m (121.4m) | 16.7m (14.1m) | 11.2p (11.1p)   | 5.2p (4.7p)   |
| Leisure (F)             | 1.92m (1.82m)   | 161m (115m)   | 10.2p (16.6p)   | 5.25p (4.75p) |
| Lowy (Robert H) (F)     | 15.1m (12.7m)   | 1.5m (0.78m)  | 1.61p (1.32p)   | 0.2p (0p)     |
| Matthew Clark (H)       | 17.5m (12.5m)   | 15.5m (7.19m) | 22.5p (19.8p)   | 9p (8p)       |
| REG Holdings (F)        | 19.1m (17.1m)   | 2.89m (4.41m) | 18.03p (27.47p) | 16p (16p)     |
| Vandy (H) (H)           | 280m (135m)     | 6.15m (5.03m) | 9p (7.5p)       | 2.25p (2.5p)  |

(Y) - Fiscal (H) - Half-year (F) - Full-year (H) - Three months

## Outsourcing deal for Hoskyns

ROGER TRAPP

Cap Gemini Sogeti, the computer services company that trades as Hoskyns in the UK, is to acquire Central Management Services from British Steel in a move that demonstrates British companies' growing enthusiasm for outsourcing operations they do not regard as core to their business.

The deal involves Hoskyns taking over the assets and goodwill of CMS, including its Rotherham headquarters and more than 300 staff, coupled with a series of contracts worth £125m over an initial five-year period under which the computer company will provide IT

outsourcing and project services back to British Steel.

Coming on the same day as Andersen Consulting's £344.5m, 10-year deal to provide IT and finance services to the stores group Sainsbury, it is evidence that the outsourcing trend is unstoppable, said independent computer industry analyst Richard Holway.

He is predicting this area of the computer business will in the next 12 months at least equal last year's estimated growth rate of 40 per cent. "I can see absolutely no evidence of this growth peaking at all," he added. The trend is being fuelled by the belief that giving specialists responsibility for an-

cillary parts of their businesses will give companies competitive advantage.

Andersen and Hoskyns are two of a growing number of service companies that are helping make this area the fastest-growing part of the UK computer market. Many of the big players are US-based, such as the General Motors subsidiary EDS, which has won a £1m-plus contract to run the Inland Revenue's computer systems, and its main rival, Computer Sciences Corp, which has agreed deals with British Aerospace and Lucas.

Andersen specialises in supplying accounting services to international oil companies, such

## Reg Vardy powers ahead with 35% boost

TOM STEVENSON  
City Editor

The success story at the up-market car dealer Reg Vardy continued yesterday with the announcement of a 35 per cent rise in pre-tax profits in the six months to October.

The rise in profits during the six-month period was struck from a jump in sales from £184.6m to £279.8m.

Almost £25m of the increase came from newly acquired operations. Earnings per share moved ahead to 9p (7.5p), allowing a 12.5 per cent increase in the dividend from 2p to 2.25p.

Peter Vardy, chairman and son of the company's founder, said: "We have made substantial progress in the period despite difficult trading conditions."

"Significant growth has come from new dealerships as well as from organic growth in the core business. We are looking forward to 1996 when we believe we will see improving margins as the recovery in consumer confidence grows."

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derland in 1976 on the death of his father, Mr Vardy has built the company up to its current total of 40 outlets in four geographical regions. From its roots in luxury car franchises such as Aston Martin and BMW, the company has diversified into volumes ranges and has success selling nearly new and other used cars.

Breaking with the industry tradition of dealerships selling only one make of car, Vardy has set up a chain of MotorZone outlets, which concentrate on newly new cars.

These are attractive to buyers who avoid paying the high depreciation cost of a new car, which loses a sizeable propor-

tion of its value the moment it leaves the forecourt.

During the first half vehicle sales volumes increased by 42.4 per cent to 30,125 cars. Service, parts and bodyshop activities also moved ahead well, with sales and gross profits up more than 10 per cent.

Plans for 1996 include more MotorZone openings and the creation of a contract hire operation to use existing facilities to better effect.

When Reg Vardy was floated in 1989 its shares were valued at 90p, since when they have tripled in value. The rise in the value of the company has boosted Peter Vardy's 41 per cent stake to a little over £50m.

**Lunch for a Fiver.**  
**May we**  
**recommend the FT**  
**for starters.**

Tomorrow, the Financial Times launches its annual 'Lunch for a Fiver' offer. From Monday, January 15 for the next two weeks you can enjoy a two course lunch from as little as £5. Around 350 restaurants throughout the country will be participating in the offer, some charging £5, others £7.50 or £10.

All you have to do for starters is buy the FT tomorrow for a list of participating restaurants. Then make a reservation stating the FT 'Lunch for a Fiver' offer. It's that simple.

No FT, no comment.

John's 100.00



## market report/shares

TAKING STOCK

## Downgrading by analysts puts the bite on Unilever

## DATA BANK

FT-SE 100  
3,654.9 - 16.6

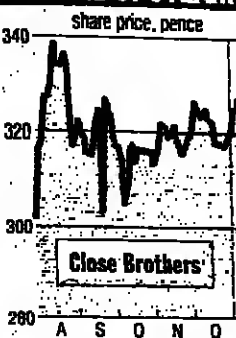
FT-SE 250  
4,015.3 - 24.3

FT-SE 350  
1,816 - 8.8

SEAQ VOLUME  
865.2m shares,  
29,903 bargains

Gifts Index  
95.33 + 0.02

## SHARE SPOTLIGHT



An Anglo Dutch securities house took a bite out of Unilever, the Anglo Dutch divestment to foods giant.

ABN Amro House Goyett cut its profit forecasts and downgraded its share recommendation to hold.

In 1994, Unilever, hit by its Persil Power washing powder fiasco, produced profits of £2.38bn. House Goyett has cut its forecast for last year from £2.5bn to £2.3bn and this year's estimate from £2.8bn to £2.7bn. The reductions stem from the deteriorating economic climate in Germany.

Unilever fell 25p to 1317p. Other food producers were under pressure with United Biscuits, unsettled by a lower-than-expected price for its Keebler frozen food business and rumours of a downgrading, crumbling 16p to 254p.

MAL, the media and money trading group, was another under the analytical whip.

NatWest Securities moved from hold to buy, suggesting it should sell its money broking side and its other financial operations and buy television production capacity.

It adds: "If such a route is followed massive value will be created for shareholders and the individual businesses will flourish." But failure to act will provide "scope for a third party to realise the value. Either way there is scope for substantial share price upside."

The shares rose 5.5p to 330p. The rest of the stock market remained under the Wall Street whip. But with the Dow Jones Average recovering, at least during London hours, a 26.2-point FT-SE 100 index fall was reduced to 16.6 at the close.

Although shares have fallen for three days many observers said they were encouraged by the way the market had limited the damage.



## MARKET REPORT

## DEREK PAIN

Stock market reporter of the year

Footsie's decline, from its peak, has been contained to 65.7 points in often busy trading. "True there has been some selling, but people are shopping for what they hope are bargains," said one trader.

Turnover, for the third consecutive session, topped 800 million indicating that whatever the direction of shares the market was operating comfortably above its break-even level.

Fortis was again heavily traded with Seaq putting turnover at 40.5 million; the price rose 8.5p to 368.5p and Granada put on 11p to 664p.

into the spotlight, scoring the best blue chip gain with a 4p advance to 152p. It is seen as a likely recipient of leisure cash once the Fortis/Granada confrontation is over. Some are prepared to bet it will soon be engaged in bid action. But Bass, the brewer, for long regarded as the most likely bidder seems to have lost some of its ardour, prompting some to pull Scottish & Newcastle into the frame.

P&O expressed relief that Eurotunnel was soldiering on, gaining 12p to 487p. Trafalgar House added 1.25p to 30p on the proposed sale of its house-building division to Persimmon, down 10p at 199p.

House of Fraser, the department store chain, continued to defy gravity, gaining 5p to 173p (after 175p).

The shares fell to 163p when it produced another profit warning on Tuesday. The market remains convinced management changes are on the way and the group looks vulnerable to a strike. Storehouse's trading statement sent the shares reeling 20.5p to 300.5p.

Close Brothers, the merchant bank embracing small companies market-maker Winford Securities, attracted interest. The shares gained 7p to 335p with some suggesting an intriguing deal was in the offing.

Reaxam, the troubled paper and packaging group, fell 12p to 366p following the management changes. The troubles of the packaging industry have forced the group to make two profit warnings in the past six

months. The pending arrival of Jeremy Lancaster as chairman and Rolf Borjesson as chief executive could herald widespread changes at the group, which still looks vulnerable.

Learho's proposed demerger pushed the shares 5.5p higher to 192.5p, but profit-takers moved into Airtours, off 5p to 413p.

ML Laboratories, ahead of what are expected to be encouraging developments later this month, rose 6p to 360p.

McDonnell Information Systems gained 9p to 59p following the arrival of Geac Canada group, with 3.79 per cent of the beleaguered computer group; MADS was little changed at 204p as further US selling became apparent. Allied Colloids fell 7p to 126p and shopfitter Campbell & Arncliffe lost its 4p gain to end at 16p on the increased Highland Electronic shareholding.

Southend Properties edged forward another 1p to 47p as rumours strengthened that properties worth £25m are likely to be reversed into the group. Any deal would need the say-so of Malcolm Dugli, the chairman who has nearly 20 per cent. Southend has assets of around 90p a share and it is said the deal will price its shares at 72p. The move is also likely to lead to new management being drafted in.

Costain, the struggling construction group, held at 74p as Arab interests increased their grip. Raymond International picked up nearly 5 million shares, lifting its stake to 18.06 per cent. Mohamed Abdullah Kharafi & Sons, Kuwait's biggest contractor, has 13.1 per cent. The two Middle Eastern groups have been buying Costain shares for 18 months.

## Share Price Data

Prices are in sterling, unless stated. The right is last year's dividend, grossed up by 20 per cent, as a percentage of the share price. The price/earnings ratio is shown in parentheses. Other details: Ex rights = Ex-dividend as Ex at United Securities Market's Suspended List. Party Paid p. Nil Paid Shares.

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Call cost 50p per minute (including rate), and stop at all other lines. Call charges include

## Market leaders: Top 20 volumes

Stock Volume Stock Volume Stock Volume Stock Volume

Fortis 420000 British Steel 100000 Vodafone 60000 Sainsbury 72000

Shell 380000 BT 100000 Tesco 60000 Lloyds 60000

British Airways 350000 British Gas 100000 Biffaward 60000

BP 320000 British Telecom 100000 WPP 60000

BT 300000 National Grid 100000

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Foreign Exchange Rates

| STERLING     |        | DOLLAR  |          | DOLLAR |         | DOLLAR   |      | DOLLAR  |          | D-MARK |
|--------------|--------|---------|----------|--------|---------|----------|------|---------|----------|--------|
| Country      | Spot   | 1 month | 3 months | Spot   | 1 month | 3 months | Spot | 1 month | 3 months | D-MARK |
| US           | 154.47 | 15-11   | 38-33    | 1000   | -       | -        | 0-5  | 1000    | 10363    |        |
| Canada       | 210.03 | 19-8    | 38-33    | 1389.2 | 0-3     | -        | 0-5  | 1000    | 10363    |        |
| Germany      | 74.00  | 8-48    | 54-44    | 147.20 | 0-1     | -        | 0-5  | 1000    | 10363    |        |
| France       | 260.00 | 35-00   | 53-14    | 400.00 | 0-1     | -        | 0-5  | 1000    | 10363    |        |
| Italy        | 248.86 | 77-32   | 57-22    | 145.58 | 0-1     | -        | 0-5  | 1000    | 10363    |        |
| Japan        | 135.00 | 15-11   | 37-38    | 1000   | 0-3     | -        | 0-5  | 1000    | 10363    |        |
| Belgium      | 458.48 | 12-15   | 37-38    | 1000   | 0-3     | -        | 0-5  | 1000    | 10363    |        |
| Denmark      | 85.00  | 38-45   | 53-54    | 1000   | 0-3     | -        | 0-5  | 1000    | 10363    |        |
| Netherlands  | 248.81 | 63-54   | 106-08   | 159.70 | 0-1     | -        | 0-5  | 1000    | 10363    |        |
| Ireland      | 193.73 | 12-15   | 37-38    | 1000   | 0-3     | -        | 0-5  | 1000    | 10363    |        |
| Norway       | 57.75  | 12-15   | 37-38    | 1000   | 0-3     | -        | 0-5  | 1000    | 10363    |        |
| Sweden       | 105.00 | 12-15   | 37-38    | 1000   | 0-3     | -        | 0-5  | 1000    | 10363    |        |
| Switzerland  | 205.72 | 12-15   | 37-38    | 1000   | 0-3     | -        | 0-5  | 1000    | 10363    |        |
| Hong Kong    | 119.45 | 0-0     | 0-0      | 255.50 | 0-0     | -        | 0-0  | 1000    | 10363    |        |
| Malaysia     | 148.88 | 23-37   | 57-12    | 1000   | 0-3     | -        | 0-5  | 1000    | 10363    |        |
| Singapore    | 57.75  | 0-0     | 0-0      | 255.50 | 0-0     | -        | 0-0  | 1000    | 10363    |        |
| Saudi Arabia | 57.75  | 0-0     | 0-0      | 255.50 | 0-0     | -        | 0-0  | 1000    | 10363    |        |
| Taiwan       | 23.70  | 0-0     | 0-0      | 142.23 | 0-0     | -        | 0-0  | 1000    | 10363    |        |

OTHER SPOT RATES

| Country      | Starting | Dollar | Country     | Starting | Dollar  |
|--------------|----------|--------|-------------|----------|---------|
| Argentina    | 154.49   | 0.9999 | Nigeria     | 12.079   | 85.0000 |
| Brazil       | 260.00   | 0.0003 | Pakistan    | 0.5949   | 0.2535  |
| Canada       | 154.47   | 0.0003 | Philippines | 22.8988  | 0.2535  |
| France       | 260.00   | 0.0003 | Spain       | 16.6300  | 0.2535  |
| Germany      | 74.00    | 0.0003 | Sweden      | 23.493   | 0.2535  |
| Italy        | 248.86   | 0.0003 | Switzerland | 72.918   | 0.2535  |
| Japan        | 135.00   | 0.0003 | Taiwan      | 56.033   | 0.2535  |
| Netherlands  | 248.81   | 0.0003 | Thailand    | 42.562   | 0.2535  |
| Norway       | 57.75    | 0.0003 | UK          | 3.0717   | 0.2535  |
| Sweden       | 105.00   | 0.0003 |             |          |         |
| Switzerland  | 205.72   | 0.0003 |             |          |         |
| Hong Kong    | 119.45   | 0.0003 |             |          |         |
| Malaysia     | 148.88   | 0.0003 |             |          |         |
| Singapore    | 57.75    | 0.0003 |             |          |         |
| Saudi Arabia | 57.75    | 0.0003 |             |          |         |
| Taiwan       | 23.70    | 0.0003 |             |          |         |

Notes: Forward rates quoted high to low are at a discount and quoted low to high are at a premium. Rates in spot rates are based on spot rates. For the 1-month rate, the 1-month rate is quoted. For the 3-month rate, the 3-month rate is quoted. For the 6-month rate, the 6-month rate is quoted. For the 9-month rate, the 9-month rate is quoted. For the 12-month rate, the 12-month rate is quoted.

Foreign Exchange Rates are quoted as of 08:01 12/23/2003. Cash rate 300 p.p. per month (cash rate) 300 p.p. per month.

Tourist Rates

| C. Rupee          | Country  | Starting | Dollar   | C. Rupee              | Country   | Starting  | Dollar    |
|-------------------|----------|----------|----------|-----------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Australia/Dollars | 15000    | 15000    | 15000    | France/Francs         | 23000     | 23000     | 23000     |
| Australia/Dollars | 20000    | 20000    | 20000    | Germany/Dollars       | 3600000   | 3600000   | 3600000   |
| Australia/Dollars | 44 00/00 | 44 00/00 | 44 00/00 | Greece/Dollars        | 09400     | 09400     | 09400     |
| Brazil            | 10000    | 10000    | 10000    | Hong Kong/Dollars     | 23600000  | 23600000  | 23600000  |
| Brazil            | 12 85/00 | 12 85/00 | 12 85/00 | India/Dollars         | 160000000 | 160000000 | 160000000 |
| Canada            | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 | Italy/Dollars         | 05400     | 05400     | 05400     |
| France            | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 | Japan/Dollars         |           |           |           |
| France            | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 | South Africa/Dollars  |           |           |           |
| France            | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 | Switzerland/Dollars   |           |           |           |
| France            | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 | United States/Dollars |           |           |           |
| France            | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 |                       |           |           |           |
| France            | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 |                       |           |           |           |
| France            | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 |                       |           |           |           |
| France            | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 |                       |           |           |           |
| France            | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 |                       |           |           |           |
| France            | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 |                       |           |           |           |
| France            | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 |                       |           |           |           |
| France            | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 |                       |           |           |           |
| France            | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 |                       |           |           |           |
| France            | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 |                       |           |           |           |
| France            | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 |                       |           |           |           |
| France            | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 |                       |           |           |           |
| France            | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 |                       |           |           |           |
| France            | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 |                       |           |           |           |
| France            | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 |                       |           |           |           |
| France            | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 |                       |           |           |           |
| France            | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 |                       |           |           |           |
| France            | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 |                       |           |           |           |
| France            | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 |                       |           |           |           |
| France            | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 |                       |           |           |           |
| France            | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 |                       |           |           |           |
| France            | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 |                       |           |           |           |
| France            | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 |                       |           |           |           |
| France            | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 |                       |           |           |           |
| France            | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 |                       |           |           |           |
| France            | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 |                       |           |           |           |
| France            | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 |                       |           |           |           |
| France            | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 |                       |           |           |           |
| France            | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 |                       |           |           |           |
| France            | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 |                       |           |           |           |
| France            | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 |                       |           |           |           |
| France            | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 |                       |           |           |           |
| France            | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 |                       |           |           |           |
| France            | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 |                       |           |           |           |
| France            | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 |                       |           |           |           |
| France            | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 |                       |           |           |           |
| France            | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 |                       |           |           |           |
| France            | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 |                       |           |           |           |
| France            | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 |                       |           |           |           |
| France            | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 |                       |           |           |           |
| France            | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 |                       |           |           |           |
| France            | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 |                       |           |           |           |
| France            | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 |                       |           |           |           |
| France            | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 |                       |           |           |           |
| France            | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 |                       |           |           |           |
| France            | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 |                       |           |           |           |
| France            | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 |                       |           |           |           |
| France            | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 |                       |           |           |           |
| France            | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 | 52 98/00 |                       |           |           |           |
| France            |          |          |          |                       |           |           |           |

RECEIVED



# Flyer averts crash landing to close gap on One Man

GREG WOOD reports from Wincanton

It says much for the fever that has gripped many punters since One Man's victory in the King George that the result of the John Bull Chase here yesterday raised barely a murmur in the ante-post market for the Gold Cup. Dublin Flyer, an immensely popular horse with a spectacular fencing technique, proved himself to be better than ever, but was cut just two points to 14-1 for Cheltenham showpiece chase. Justice, it seems, is the first casualty of the One Man era.

Dublin Flyer's defeat of Travo and the apparently declining Viking Flagship, the two-mile champion chaser, was achieved despite two significant lapses. First, the starter, though hardly facing a field of Grand National proportions, succeeded in sending the four runners on their way in a manner more akin to a cycling time-trial than a horse race. Dublin Flyer, who

needs to set the pace, immediately had 15 lengths to make up. The second mistake, however, was all his own. He met the final furlong, five out, so violently askew that he all but turned sideways in clambering across. It is an immense tribute to Dublin Flyer's resilience that he not only survived, but went on to win going clear. "I could see

**RICHARD EDMONDSON**  
NAP: Going Around  
(Musselburgh 3.15)  
NB: Northern Saddle  
(Ascot 1.30)

it coming a couple of strides away," Brendan Powell, his rider, said, "but with a horse like him there's not a lot you can do." Dublin Flyer has built his reputation at or near yesterday's trip of two miles five furlongs, but his novice chasing record includes a victory at 26 furlongs, the Gold Cup distance. That is now a serious target, even for his instinctively pessimistic trainer, Tim Forster.

"That was a fine perfor-

mance," Forster said, "especially as he has gone right-handed. The owner will be keen to run in the Gold Cup, and he's entitled to let him take his chance. That will be his first priority, but I expect we'll enter him in the National too. After all, he might fall at the first at Cheltenham." Even Forster, though, would have to concede that an early departure is unlikely, as Dublin Flyer may instead substitute One Man's fencing to a fierce examination. "One Man's a very good horse," Powell conceded yesterday, "but he'll have to jump with me down the back."

The Festival remains the principal target too for Viking Flagship, despite yesterday's inspiring performance. David Nicholson's runner has taken the last two runnings of the Queen's Cup, the Champion Chase, and appeared in similar out of sorts before last season's victory, but Corral's offer of 8-1 (from 5-1) for a hat-trick is good news for the Irish. Three horses from across the water—Sound Man at 15-8, Skirion Platinum at 3-1 and Klairon

3.05: Unaided Mistle went well last month despite jumping errors and Dextra Dove is seeking his eighth successive win. The handicapper may have caught up with both and the odds are now 11-10. But not an easy ride and having to carry weight to Ground Nut, who was arguably a better hurdler, and Incheiloch, precludes confidence.

**ASCOT**  
2.35: Certainly Strong improved in overcoming a smart field at Sandown last time. She should not be troubled by the soft ground, but is not an easy ride and having to carry weight to Ground Nut, who was arguably a better hurdler, and Incheiloch, precludes confidence.

**HYPERION**  
12.55: Quaff 2.35: Certainly Strong 3.05: Well Briefed 2.05: Storm North 3.35: Treasure Again

**GOING:** Good to Soft (No place on hurdles course).  
Right-hand course with rising uphill at end. ADVICE: Members of the Association of Racecourse Owners, 10-15, 16-17, 18-19, 20-21, 22-23, 24-25, 26-27, 28-29, 30-31, 32-33, 34-35, 36-37, 38-39, 40-41, 42-43, 44-45, 46-47, 48-49, 50-51, 52-53, 54-55, 56-57, 58-59, 60-61, 62-63, 64-65, 66-67, 68-69, 70-71, 72-73, 74-75, 76-77, 78-79, 80-81, 82-83, 84-85, 86-87, 88-89, 90-91, 92-93, 94-95, 96-97, 98-99, 100-101, 102-103, 104-105, 106-107, 108-109, 110-111, 112-113, 114-115, 116-117, 118-119, 120-121, 122-123, 124-125, 126-127, 128-129, 130-131, 132-133, 134-135, 136-137, 138-139, 140-141, 142-143, 144-145, 146-147, 148-149, 150-151, 152-153, 154-155, 156-157, 158-159, 160-161, 162-163, 164-165, 166-167, 168-169, 170-171, 172-173, 174-175, 176-177, 178-179, 180-181, 182-183, 184-185, 186-187, 188-189, 190-191, 192-193, 194-195, 196-197, 198-199, 200-201, 202-203, 204-205, 206-207, 208-209, 210-211, 212-213, 214-215, 216-217, 218-219, 220-221, 222-223, 224-225, 226-227, 228-229, 230-231, 232-233, 234-235, 236-237, 238-239, 240-241, 242-243, 244-245, 246-247, 248-249, 250-251, 252-253, 254-255, 256-257, 258-259, 260-261, 262-263, 264-265, 266-267, 268-269, 270-271, 272-273, 274-275, 276-277, 278-279, 280-281, 282-283, 284-285, 286-287, 288-289, 290-291, 292-293, 294-295, 296-297, 298-299, 300-301, 302-303, 304-305, 306-307, 308-309, 310-311, 312-313, 314-315, 316-317, 318-319, 320-321, 322-323, 324-325, 326-327, 328-329, 330-331, 332-333, 334-335, 336-337, 338-339, 340-341, 342-343, 344-345, 346-347, 348-349, 350-351, 352-353, 354-355, 356-357, 358-359, 360-361, 362-363, 364-365, 366-367, 368-369, 370-371, 372-373, 374-375, 376-377, 378-379, 380-381, 382-383, 384-385, 386-387, 388-389, 390-391, 392-393, 394-395, 396-397, 398-399, 400-401, 402-403, 404-405, 406-407, 408-409, 410-411, 412-413, 414-415, 416-417, 418-419, 420-421, 422-423, 424-425, 426-427, 428-429, 430-431, 432-433, 434-435, 436-437, 438-439, 440-441, 442-443, 444-445, 446-447, 448-449, 450-451, 452-453, 454-455, 456-457, 458-459, 460-461, 462-463, 464-465, 466-467, 468-469, 470-471, 472-473, 474-475, 476-477, 478-479, 480-481, 482-483, 484-485, 486-487, 488-489, 490-491, 492-493, 494-495, 496-497, 498-499, 500-501, 502-503, 504-505, 506-507, 508-509, 510-511, 512-513, 514-515, 516-517, 518-519, 520-521, 522-523, 524-525, 526-527, 528-529, 530-531, 532-533, 534-535, 536-537, 538-539, 540-541, 542-543, 544-545, 546-547, 548-549, 550-551, 552-553, 554-555, 556-557, 558-559, 560-561, 562-563, 564-565, 566-567, 568-569, 570-571, 572-573, 574-575, 576-577, 578-579, 580-581, 582-583, 584-585, 586-587, 588-589, 590-591, 592-593, 594-595, 596-597, 598-599, 600-601, 602-603, 604-605, 606-607, 608-609, 610-611, 612-613, 614-615, 616-617, 618-619, 620-621, 622-623, 624-625, 626-627, 628-629, 630-631, 632-633, 634-635, 636-637, 638-639, 640-641, 642-643, 644-645, 646-647, 648-649, 650-651, 652-653, 654-655, 656-657, 658-659, 660-661, 662-663, 664-665, 666-667, 668-669, 670-671, 672-673, 674-675, 676-677, 678-679, 680-681, 682-683, 684-685, 686-687, 688-689, 690-691, 692-693, 694-695, 696-697, 698-699, 700-701, 702-703, 704-705, 706-707, 708-709, 710-711, 712-713, 714-715, 716-717, 718-719, 720-721, 722-723, 724-725, 726-727, 728-729, 730-731, 732-733, 734-735, 736-737, 738-739, 740-741, 742-743, 744-745, 746-747, 748-749, 750-751, 752-753, 754-755, 756-757, 758-759, 760-761, 762-763, 764-765, 766-767, 768-769, 770-771, 772-773, 774-775, 776-777, 778-779, 780-781, 782-783, 784-785, 786-787, 788-789, 790-791, 792-793, 794-795, 796-797, 798-799, 800-801, 802-803, 804-805, 806-807, 808-809, 810-811, 812-813, 814-815, 816-817, 818-819, 820-821, 822-823, 824-825, 826-827, 828-829, 830-831, 832-833, 834-835, 836-837, 838-839, 840-841, 842-843, 844-845, 846-847, 848-849, 850-851, 852-853, 854-855, 856-857, 858-859, 860-861, 862-863, 864-865, 866-867, 868-869, 870-871, 872-873, 874-875, 876-877, 878-879, 880-881, 882-883, 884-885, 886-887, 888-889, 890-891, 892-893, 894-895, 896-897, 898-899, 900-901, 902-903, 904-905, 906-907, 908-909, 910-911, 912-913, 914-915, 916-917, 918-919, 920-921, 922-923, 924-925, 926-927, 928-929, 930-931, 932-933, 934-935, 936-937, 938-939, 940-941, 942-943, 944-945, 946-947, 948-949, 950-951, 952-953, 954-955, 956-957, 958-959, 960-961, 962-963, 964-965, 966-967, 968-969, 970-971, 972-973, 974-975, 976-977, 978-979, 980-981, 982-983, 984-985, 986-987, 988-989, 990-991, 992-993, 994-995, 996-997, 998-999, 1000-1001, 1002-1003, 1004-1005, 1006-1007, 1008-1009, 1010-1011, 1012-1013, 1014-1015, 1016-1017, 1018-1019, 1020-1021, 1022-1023, 1024-1025, 1026-1027, 1028-1029, 1030-1031, 1032-1033, 1034-1035, 1036-1037, 1038-1039, 1040-1041, 1042-1043, 1044-1045, 1046-1047, 1048-1049, 1050-1051, 1052-1053, 1054-1055, 1056-1057, 1058-1059, 1060-1061, 1062-1063, 1064-1065, 1066-1067, 1068-1069, 1070-1071, 1072-1073, 1074-1075, 1076-1077, 1078-1079, 1080-1081, 1082-1083, 1084-1085, 1086-1087, 1088-1089, 1090-1091, 1092-1093, 1094-1095, 1096-1097, 1098-1099, 1100-1101, 1102-1103, 1104-1105, 1106-1107, 1108-1109, 1110-1111, 1112-1113, 1114-1115, 1116-1117, 1118-1119, 1120-1121, 1122-1123, 1124-1125, 1126-1127, 1128-1129, 1130-1131, 1132-1133, 1134-1135, 1136-1137, 1138-1139, 1140-1141, 1142-1143, 1144-1145, 1146-1147, 1148-1149, 1150-1151, 1152-1153, 1154-1155, 1156-1157, 1158-1159, 1160-1161, 1162-1163, 1164-1165, 1166-1167, 1168-1169, 1170-1171, 1172-1173, 1174-1175, 1176-1177, 1178-1179, 1180-1181, 1182-1183, 1184-1185, 1186-1187, 1188-1189, 1190-1191, 1192-1193, 1194-1195, 1196-1197, 1198-1199, 1200-1201, 1202-1203, 1204-1205, 1206-1207, 1208-1209, 1210-1211, 1212-1213, 1214-1215, 1216-1217, 1218-1219, 1220-1221, 1222-1223, 1224-1225, 1226-1227, 1228-1229, 1230-1231, 1232-1233, 1234-1235, 1236-1237, 1238-1239, 1240-1241, 1242-1243, 1244-1245, 1246-1247, 1248-1249, 1250-1251, 1252-1253, 1254-1255, 1256-1257, 1258-1259, 1260-1261, 1262-1263, 1264-1265, 1266-1267, 1268-1269, 1270-1271, 1272-1273, 1274-1275, 1276-1277, 1278-1279, 1280-1281, 1282-1283, 1284-1285, 1286-1287, 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experience: the Apollo training school which is designed to equip the card-holders for life on Tour. The teaching panel is headed by John Jacobs, Tommy Horton and Denis Pugh; Harold Swash deals with putting, Ted Pollard with fitness and Alan Fine with psychology. European Tour officials, sponsors, agents and even the press

**Making a splash: The Tour's finishing school behind him, Steve Webster looks to a bright future** Photograph: Allsport

Webster, who at 15 chose golf instead of football (he was at Coventry City's school of excellence), comes from Althreestoce, the town that produced the Ryder Cup player Paul Broadbent. "The advice he gave me was 'Webster, don't get to miss Apollo week and to be careful over my choice of agent,'" says Webster.


The European Tour starts later this month in Singapore and

around the Paris St-Germain football organisation, will be ready for their first match – and the competition's opening tie – at home to Sheffield Eagles on 29 March, despite doubts about their progress. "People who

Peter Roe, who resigned as coach of Barrow earlier this week, has been appointed coach at Swinton. He succeeds Tony Barrow, who becomes their chief executive.

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Robson



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# Robson fits trend toward the talismanic leader



Robson: fulfils criteria

In 1974, as the Football Association showed Sir Alf Ramsey the door, two footballers sufficiently esteemed that the world distinguished seemed inadequate to raking through the embers of their careers.

Bobby Robson was in his last season at Preston while Bobby Moore was ending calm authority at Fulham. Great players, they were about to be neglected by their country. Availability counted for nothing and both were barely considered as the new manager of England. Lancaster Gate turned to the trusted method of choosing a successful club manager: Don Revie.

It was a decision that was understood, if not universally embraced, at the time – and neither Charlton nor Moore did enough in club management to suggest the nation missed much – conforming, as it did, with conventional thought. Top clubs, never mind the national side, hardly ever went for senior players and risked their futures with them.

Manchester United had allowed Charlton to leave for Deepdale even though they had proved the exception to the rule, albeit in the extraordinary circumstances of the aftermath of war, by appointing Matt Busby

Guy Hodgson considers how modern methods of choosing club managers could affect the search for Terry Venables' successor

In 1945, they could have used the services of their most respected player in 1972, when Frank O'Farrell was dismissed, but instead they appointed the tried (in more ways than one as it would prove) in Tommy Docherty.

Twenty years on and the situation has altered to an extent where England may be prepared to depart from convention and appoint a younger, rawer man as successor to Terry Venables. Kevin Keegan

(who has said he is not interested), Bryan Robson, Ray Wilkins and Glenn Hoddle are being put forward as credible candidates despite their relative inexperience as club managers.

Graham Kelly, the FA's chief executive, was a barometer of that change yesterday, conceding on Radio Five Live that skillful club management does not naturally translate into success at national level. "The jobs are very different," he said. "The ideal man will be English and

who played for England."

The mood seems to have switched in favour of a talismanic figure along the lines of Franz Beckenbauer, who became West Germany's coach as soon as he discarded his boots, and guided his country to successive World Cup finals, winning in 1990.

It has at club level, too. The fashion is for younger men like Robson who cannot only decide tactics off the pitch but put them into operation on it, if the need is there. Even Keegan, who at

44 is older, fits the mould, working his miracle on the Tyne without reference to earlier work with lesser clubs than Newcastle United.

"Continuity is the key at international level," Kelly said yesterday while stressing that both Robson and Wilkins had been working under Venables. "Young players have come into the England side and a system has evolved. There is no point chopping and changing every two to four years."

But for every Beckenbauer there is a Michel Platini, who became manager of France without particular success after a glori-

ous playing career. His problem was that he could not replace a vital ingredient, himself.

The last word should belong to Danny Blanchflower, who guided Northern Ireland and Chelsea in the belief that coaches are only as good as their players. "Great teams don't need managers," he said. "Brazil won the World Cup in 1970, playing exhilarating football, with a manager they'd had for three weeks. Now what influence can a man have who's only been with them for that length of time? What about Real Madrid at their greatest? You can't even remember who the manager was."

## Police let FA settle Highbury fracas

Football  
GUY HODGSON

Police revealed yesterday that they will leave any punishment for the touchline fracas that took place between Bruce Rioch and Terry McDermott on Wednesday night to the Football Association.

Officers from the Metropolitan Police interviewed the referee, Gerald Ashby, immediately after Arsenal's 2-0 Coca-Cola Cup quarter-final victory at Highbury but were assured that no punches made contact when Rioch, the Arsenal manager, and McDermott, the Newcastle assistant, squared up to each other after David Ginola's sending-off.

The FA have ordered an inquiry into the incident which could lead to both men facing a charge of bringing the game into disrepute. "Clearly we have a responsibility to look into

events at Highbury," a spokesman said.

The president of Internazionale, Massimo Moratti, has said that Alan Shearer could become a transfer target. Inter, managed by the Englishman Roy Hodgson, want Real Madrid's Chilean striker Ivan Zamorano but Shearer is another option.

Describing the England player as "an interesting alternative," Moratti added: "We're still in a completely exploratory phase on all fronts."

Shearer, who has been repeatedly linked with a big-money move abroad since recovering from the cruciate knee ligament injury which kept him out for most of 1993, responded: "I am flattered that a major club like Inter should be interested in me, but I have recently signed a three-year extension to my contract."

Newcastle have failed in their attempt to sign Bayern Munich

striker Jean-Pierre Papin on loan. Kevin Keegan was hoping to borrow the 32-year-old French international until the end of the season but the German club have turned him down. However, Papin will be available at the end of the season for nothing. "I'm keeping my fingers crossed. It would be great to go to Newcastle," Papin said.

The Scotland midfielder Eoin Jess, 25, has been transferred by Aberdeen after rejecting a new contract offer, a move likely to interest Newcastle, Blackburn, Everton and Bolton.

Transfers that did go through yesterday were Don Hutchison's from West Ham to Sheffield United for a club record fee of £1.2m and Nottingham Forest's purchase of Hull's Northern Ireland goalkeeper Alan Fothergill. The fee is £250,000 although that could rise to £400,000.

Everton have followed Millwall in looking to Russia for new players. The Goodison club will bring the Dinamo Moscow midfielder Igor Dobrovolski to Merseyside next week. The experienced international will join initially on trial with a view to an extended loan period. He is a friend of Andrei Kanchelskii and his transfer market value is around £400,000.

Leeds United, winners of the League Cup in 1993, have been made favourites to win the competition this season after drawing First Division opponents in the two-legged Coca-Cola semi-finals next month.

They will play the winners of the replay between Birmingham City and Norwich, while the other semi-final is an all-Premiership affair between Arsenal and Aston Villa.

Coca-Cola Cup semi-final: Arsenal v Aston Villa, Norwich v Sheffield Wednesday. First legs to be played on 11 and 12 February, second legs on 21 and 22 February.

■ The Brazilian striker Edmundo has been charged with manslaughter after a car crash in Rio in which three people died.

## Jones at head of new body

TREVOR HAYLETT

Footballers vastly overpaid? Apparently we have not seen the start of it, for a new players' organisation that has been set up in the aftermath of the Bosman judgment on transfers claims they have been selling themselves short for too long.

Appropriately, for these stakes are pretty high, the new body which will advise out-of-contract players, who could now earn themselves free transfers, is to be known as Poca (Players Out of Contract Association) – and with Vinnie Jones a driving force behind it it will not lack publicity.

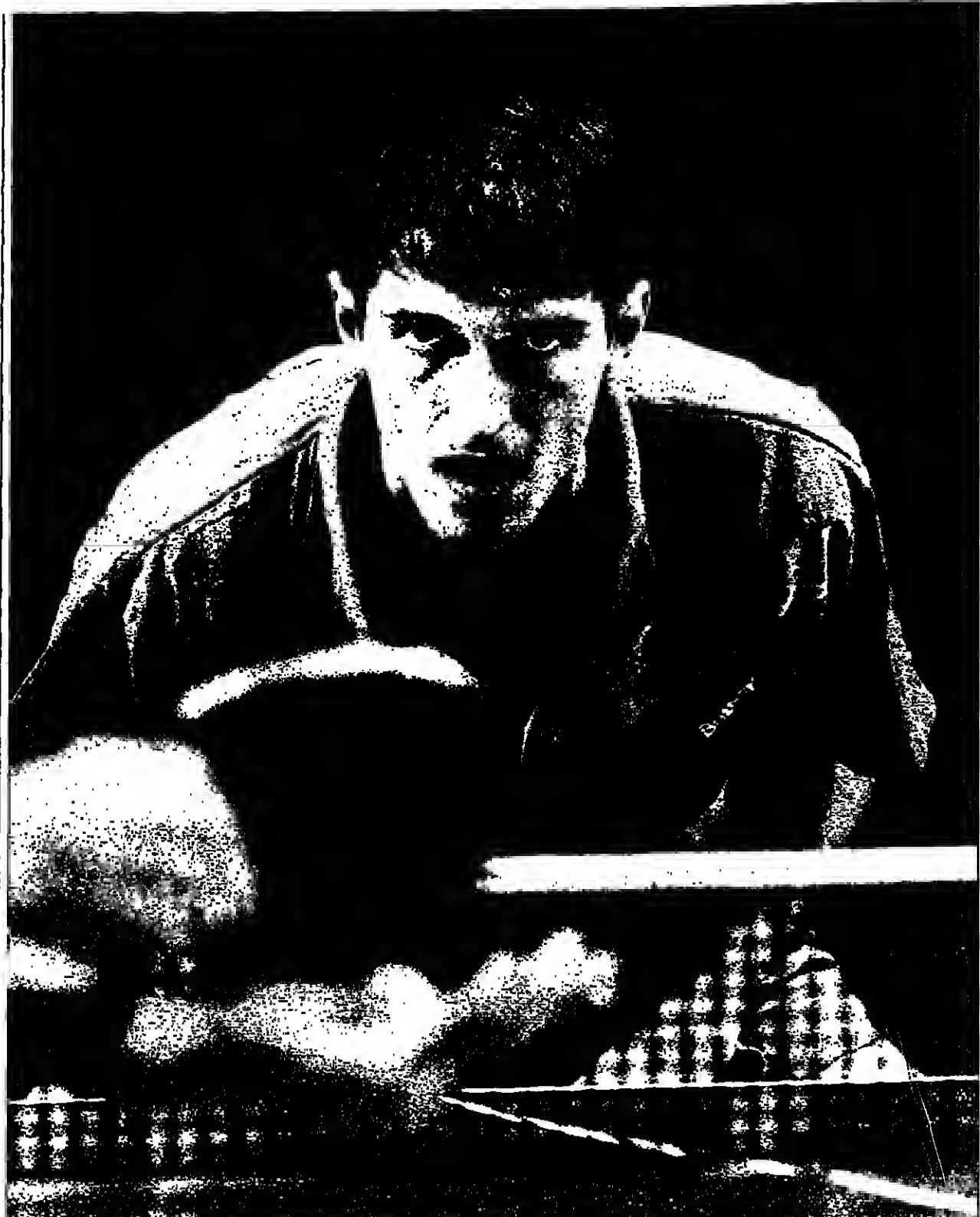
Before a gathering of players – 800 were invited but only around 30 turned up – agents and club representatives, Poca, the brainchild of Jones' solicitors, Reid Minty, came into being yesterday in a Watford hotel. No promises, you understand, but the suggestions made to a handful of players from Arsenal, Tottenham and lesser lights were substantial.

For starters, how about a 25 per cent share for players of the new television deal, reputed to be in the order of £600m? That alone would put an extra £100,000 per year in the pockets of Premiership performers, claimed Jonathan Ebsworth from Reid Minty.

According to him, the long-established players' union, the Professional Footballers' Association, has been left behind in the new commercial world. "The PFA are not informing the players fully of their rights. Vinnie had no idea of the implications of Bosman – and presumably that goes for all other players," Ebsworth said. "The commercial aspect of the game has been blown wide open in the last five years and they have been left behind. Wage levels will go up all round because clubs will no longer have to find transfer fees."

Nicholas Stewart QC, an expert in restraint of trade cases, believes that, although the Bosman ruling affects only those players moving from one EU country to another, it is bound to enhance domestic transfers as well. "Islands can't continue to operate as islands," he said. "After Bosman very few things will remain the same."

The European Commission in Brussels has confirmed that the changes only relate to "trans-frontier moves" and that domestic transfers (including those between England and Scotland) would remain as before. The European Social Affairs Commissioner, Padraig Flynn, said: "It is possible to continue domestic transfers in an individual member state. That is not contrary to the court judgement."



Eye contact: Matthew Syed watches Switzerland's Thierry Muller serve yesterday

Photograph: David Ashdown

## Syed set to rise above the feud

Rob Dorsett reports from Manchester on the table tennis players' quest for Atlanta places

By the fact that it is an individual event, so strictly speaking he will not be playing with Chen. It certainly leaves a bad taste in the mouth for Don Parker, the British Olympic Association official who was England's table tennis team manager for 11 years. "Any player should be available for the national squad – unconditionally," he said. "It's about principles. No one should be allowed to say 'I'll play for England if such-and-such doesn't play'. I'm very surprised that Prean has selected for England."

Chen, 33, who is coaching

There was much tension, much palm-wiping and not a little controversy at the European Olympic qualifying event yesterday.

Behind the action around the tables at the impressive Nymex Arena here is a bitter feud between the two British men who have already qualified for Atlanta by virtue of their world rankings. Carl Prean, ranked No 28 in the world, vowed that he would never play in the same team as the Chinese-born Chen Xinhua, the world No 18 who gained a British passport through marriage.

Prean has not played for England so far this season. That he will play for Britain in the Olympics this summer is justified

Matthew Syed and Andrea Holt for this competition and plans to retire after the Olympics, agrees. "Prean is acting like a young boy," he said. "And if he is determined to act like that, I've got nothing to say to him. Sports people should play sport, not talk politics."

The issue could cause embarrassment for Britain at the Games, which begin in June, but Syed, the British No 3 who is on course for Atlanta after a third successive win yesterday, played down the problem. "As long as they don't have to share a room

it shouldn't be a problem," he said.

Syed beat Thierry Muller yesterday to book his place in the second stage of competition with one group match left. He hopes the result, a repeat of his victory in the same competition four years ago, might be a lucky omen. "I'm quietly confident now that I will qualify. A lot depends on the draw."

He thinks he will have to play better if he comes up against Jorgen Persson. The Swedish former world champion, ranked 16th in the world, has the same, perfect record as Syed. Barring shocks, both should be going to Atlanta later this year.

## The two minutes that distracted a nation

Perhaps the shortest "match" in the history of football finished without a goal yesterday – but not without argument. Two Portuguese First Division clubs, Sporting Lisbon and Chaves, played before a handful of fans for just over two minutes yesterday to complete a match suspended 12 days ago.

However, the final whistle did not end the controversy over the league game, which had been left unfinished because of a power cut. The 145 seconds of play brought no goals and the game ended in a 1-1 draw.

"It just shows the state of shame into which our game has sunk," the Sporting coach, Carlos Queiroz, said after the two minutes of action, played out before a near-empty stadium but shown live on national television.

Both sides claimed that they should have been awarded the full points for the suspended match, charging the other with breaking rules. Chaves said the Lisbon club should have turned up to complete the match the day after its suspension. Sporting said Chaves were to blame for the failure of the lighting.

Both teams announced after the game that they would lodge formal protests with the Council of Justice, Portuguese football's highest authority. Sporting had to fit in the 1,000-kilometre round trip to the northern town of Chaves between a Portuguese Cup tie at home to Boavista on Wednesday and a vital championship game with the league leaders Porto, also at home, tomorrow. Sporting are in second place in the league, five points behind Porto.

## Canvey back on the Vase trail

Non-League notebook  
RUPERT METCALF

Canvey Island enjoyed their spell in the national media spotlight when they took Brighton and Hove Albion to a replay in the first round of the FA Cup, but tomorrow they resume their campaign in a competition in which, unlike the FA Cup, they are one of the favourites to reach Wembley.

The ebullient Essex outfit entertain another seaside club, Gorleston, from Norfolk, in

the fourth round of the FA Carlsberg Vase at their Park Lane ground. The Vase is a tournament in which a good past record often leads to continued success, and Canvey have a proud recent history.

The Isles League club were semi-finalists in 1992/93 when they were in the Essex Senior League, they reached the fourth round (the last-32 stage) the following season while they were beaten by Oxford City, in the quarter-finals last term. Only one club of this year's Vase last

32 are previous winners: Diss Town, victors in 1994, who are at home to Banstead Athletic.

Further up the non-league pyramid, the GM Vauxhall Conference has confirmed that only eight of its member clubs have gained the required ground grading from the Football League and can be considered for promotion this season. They are: Macclesfield Town (the current leaders), Woking (3rd), Kidderminster Harriers (5th), Gateshead (6th), Southport (7th), Kettering (13th), Bath (18th) and Dover (19th).

## SPORTING DIGEST

**American football**  
Jimmy Johnson is the new head coach of the Miami Dolphins. He succeeds Don Shula, the most successful coach in the National Football League who retired last week after 26 years with the team.

**Basketball**  
Miami Heat 113 Sacramento 104; New Jersey 92 New York 78; Washington 98 Philadelphia 93; Chicago 113 Seattle 97; San Antonio 92 Cleveland 86; Portland 90 Miami 69; Denver 81 Vancouver 65.

**Boxing**  
Naseem Hamed underwent keyhole surgery yesterday to repair the right hand damaged after winning the World Boxing Organisation featherweight title against the Welshman, Steve Robinson.

**TODAY'S NUMBER**  
**5**  
The number of years that the golfer Sandy Lyle has been away from the US Tour. The 1988 US Masters champion will return this year as a full member, but will retain honorary European Tour membership.

**Cricket**  
Harmed was forced to pull out of his first defence of the title for the second time against the Mexican, Amulio Castillo, which was scheduled for 10 February at London Arena. He hopes to be back in the ring in a couple of months.

**World**  
MILWAUKEE STARS (NHL) beat the St. Louis Blues 4-1 in the first round of the Stanley Cup playoffs.

**Football**  
Dundee United will play tomorrow's game against Quedlinburg at East End Park even though the funeral of their captain, Norrie McCann, who was found dead Tuesday, will not take place until next Tuesday. The match on Wednesday against Dumbarton was postponed as a mark of respect.

**CONFERENCES**  
Coca-Cola Cup quarter-final: Arsenal 2 Newcastle 0; Aston Villa 1 Wolves 0; Leeds 2 Reading 1; Norwich 1; Birmingham 1; Southampton 1; Sheffield 0; 2nd round: 1. Southampton 0; 2. Sheffield 0; 3. Sheffield 0; 4. Sheffield 0; 5. Sheffield 0; 6. Sheffield 0; 7. Sheffield 0; 8. Sheffield 0; 9. Sheffield 0; 10. Sheffield 0; 11. Sheffield 0; 12. Sheffield 0; 13. Sheffield 0; 14. Sheffield 0; 15. Sheffield 0; 16. Sheffield 0; 17. Sheffield 0; 18. Sheffield 0; 19. Sheffield 0; 20. Sheffield 0; 21. Sheffield 0; 22. Sheffield 0; 23. Sheffield 0; 24. Sheffield 0; 25. Sheffield 0; 26. Sheffield 0; 27. Sheffield 0; 28. Sheffield 0; 29. Sheffield 0; 30. Sheffield 0; 31. Sheffield 0; 32. Sheffield 0; 33. Sheffield 0; 34. Sheffield 0; 35. Sheffield 0; 36. Sheffield 0; 37. Sheffield 0; 38. Sheffield 0; 39. Sheffield 0; 40. Sheffield 0; 41. Sheffield 0; 42. Sheffield 0; 43. Sheffield 0; 44. Sheffield 0; 45. Sheffield 0; 46. Sheffield 0; 47. Sheffield 0; 48. Sheffield 0; 49. Sheffield 0; 50. 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# Keegan rules himself out of England job

Football  
PHIL SHAW

Kevin Keegan, the bookmakers' favourite to succeed Terry Venables as England coach, last night told the Football Association he was "not interested" in leaving Newcastle when the post becomes vacant after the European Championship finals this summer.

After consultations between Keegan and Newcastle's chairman, Sir John Hall, the Premiership leaders issued a statement. In it, Keegan said: "I am interested in working for nobody but Newcastle United. We have made tremendous progress in the past four years, but I know there is still an enormous amount of work to be done to take this club where it should be."

Keegan went on to say he hoped to see out the remaining seven years of a contract he had been "only too happy to sign". Sir John said he was "delighted"

with his manager's "positive response" to the situation.

The FA has thus received its first rebuff from a realistic contender. The original second favourite, Bryan Robson, said he would "answer that [the question of whether he wanted the job] if it ever comes round".

The Middlesbrough player-manager, Venables' assistant with the national team, refused to be drawn into further comment but reiterated his "100 per cent commitment" to his club, adding: "It's nice to be thought of in this way, but I am still in an apprenticeship as a manager. I have 18 months of my three-year contract to run and I don't intend moving in that time."

As heavy betting on Gerry Francis led to the Tottenham manager being installed as the new favourite, one of Venables' predecessors, Bobby Robson, was throwing his backing behind Leeds' Howard Wilkinson. "He has vast experience and is a very good manager," said Robson,

now coach to Porto. "There are other obvious high-quality candidates, but perhaps the time's not right for them."

In the latter category, Robson put Bryan Robson and Ray Wilkins. The Queen's Park Rangers manager is also part of Venables' staff, working with the Under-21 squad. Both lacked "experience at the top level", though he believed either could do the job using veteran England coach Don Howe as a "buffer".

The day began with Graham Kelly, the FA's chief executive, appearing to narrow the field when he outlined the profile of the man Lancaster Gate wanted to replace Venables when he left to concentrate on impending legal battles.

Kelly said: "We would hope the ideal candidate will be English and will have played for England. If not, who knows? We will consider all the possibilities."

The remarks seem to make non-runners of the likes of Johan Cruyff, Louis van Gaal and Alex Ferguson, while making it less likely that the FA would appoint Wilkinson, who by his own admission was a "failed player" with only a handful of games for Sheffield Wednesday.

Kelly's assertion on Monday that the FA was anxious to ensure "continuity" suggests that Bryan Robson, for all his reticence, may have an ongoing role. Meanwhile, it was confirmed that Jimmy Armfield, the broadcaster and former England full-back, will sound out opinion in the game, as he did prior to Venables' appointment in 1994.

Armfield's first public utterance on the matter - "A lot can happen between now and July" - was seen as reflecting the view that Venables might yet be persuaded to carry on. Later, however, he hinted that those who were currently coy about their interest should not be ruled out.

"Because we're in mid-season, managers can't turn around and tell their chairman, 'I'd like to go', Armfield said. "I think the situation will change with quite a few people as we go along."

## Bookies puzzle over the succession race

GREG WOOD

The puzzlement of the average England midfielder, when asked to explain the Christmas tree formation is as nothing to the confusion which gripped bookmakers when they framed odds on Terry Venables' successor on Wednesday evening.

The major firms' prices inevitably gravitated towards each other yesterday, but the clear message is that no one, not even the bookies, has the slightest idea who will lead England into the World Cup qualifying campaign.

An example of the uncertainty is Coral's offer of 6-1 about Roy Hodgson, while Halls will lay 20-1 about the latter manager. Other startling

early variations between best and worst prices included Kevin Keegan (from 4-5 up to 3-1), Bryan Robson (6-4 up to 6-1) and Gerry Francis (7-4 up to 10-1).

The market is now settling down, with Francis, Keegan and Robson the clear market leaders, despite what bookies describe as the latter two's "diplomatic statements" yesterday, but backers should not necessarily ignore the outsiders, such as Joe Royle and Ray Wilkins, both available at 20-1 with William Hill.

**NEW ENGLAND MANAGERS** (Odds supplied by William Hill): 6-4 Gerry Francis; 2-1 Kevin Keegan; Bryan Robson; 12-1 Howard Wilkinson; 20-1 Jack Charlton; Roy Hodgson; Glenn Hoddle; Joe Royle; Ray Wilkins; 25-1 Ron Atkinson; Steve Coppell; Roy Evans; 33-1 Frank Clark; Johann Cruyff; Henry Dunlop; Brian Little; 50-1 Trevor Francis; Bobby Robson; 100-1 George Graham.

## ONE-DAY INTERNATIONAL: South Africa prevented from exploiting quick start



No defence: Hansie Cronje, the South African captain, is bowled by Dominic Cork in yesterday's one-day international

Photograph: Allsport

## Hick hurries to help England

Cricket

DEREK PRINGLE  
reports from Bloemfontein

A thunderous display of batting from Graeme Hick, who reached an electrifying fifty in a mere 33 balls, has given England a chance of levelling this series. However, soon after he was out, leg before to Hansie Cronje, England's cause suffered a bizarre setback when half the floodlights fused, following the failure of a nearby electrical sub-station.

England have not won a one-day match since they beat South Africa at Melbourne four years ago in the last World Cup, and their task here was not helped by the 40-minute delay needed to fix the lights.

Like South Africa, England hoped to start with a bang, opening the innings with Phil DeFreitas, who made an almost run-a-half 17 before being caught by a horizontal forty Rhodes at cover.

If the start was brisk enough, the real explosion came when Hick began to put bat to ball, and few escaped the broadside from his blazing blade.

This pitch, as it was when England last played here six weeks ago, held little for the bowlers. Having himself bowled tidily earlier, Hick realised it held few demons, a belief he demonstrated by him smashing three balls in a row to the cover fence in an arc between backward point and Allan Donald's first over. Each stroke was of thrillingly high calibre, in both speed and execution.

Atherton, no slouch when it comes to keeping the score ticking over, was swamped in his wake, though he too notched up his fifty, albeit from a slightly

more measured 76 balls. It was only when the spinner Nicky Boje - here playing in place of Paul Adams - was introduced that the England captain began to expand his stroke play, using his feet to hit the slow left-arm over extra cover's head for a sumptuous four.

In league with Graham Thorpe, who neatly kept the scoreboard moving with dabs and deflections, Atherton was able to get England's scoring rate above 4.5, and heading towards the 5.24 needed to win.

South Africa made three changes from the team that had beaten England in Cape Town. Two of them, Andrew Hudson and Richard Snell, opened the innings, the latter with the specific task of making quick runs while fielding restrictions were in place for the first 15 overs.

After a couple of studious heaves, Snell announced himself with a leg-side whip for four off DeFreitas, who was the start of a run spree that even confused Atherton, who at one stage forgot he still needed two catching batters within 15 yards of the bat. A lapse that was not surprising, considering South Africa had posted fifty off only 63 balls.

Snell was particularly savage on Peter Martin, hitting him for 14 off the Lancashire bowler's second over, which included a mighty smite for six over long-on, his fifty from 46 balls following soon after.

However, Martin who was withdrawn almost immediately, his first two overs having cost 21 runs, was not alone in attracting punishment. And both DeFreitas and White were almost as expensive to run as South Africa put on 116 for the first wicket.

In the end Atherton was forced to spin sooner than he

would have liked, pressing Neil Smith, Hick and Mark Ramprakash into action. A change that saw Hudson introduce a range of exotic sweeps, and misses, though the umpires' fingers remained unmoved. In less than a game the umpiring has veered from the trigger happy to the impervious. A bit like going from Billy the Kid to Judge Jefferies, at least where England are concerned.

Curiously for a man who seems reticent to bowl, Hick was the pick of the three and it was him that had Snell caught by Fairbrother for 63 as he chipped the ball towards long-off. It was Hick, too, that ended Hudson's 96-ball stay not long after Atherton had dropped the opener at extra cover, a miss that was not symptomatic of England's sloppy day in the field.

Despite that, South Africa squandered their good start. In the 10 overs between the 25th and 35th overs, they added just 46 runs. Sensing they had lost the initiative, Cronje came in and began to put bat to ball in a brief but violent innings that included a six and a four before being ended by a straight ball from Cork.

With Cronje gone, his team seemed only too happy to follow suit. In the space of 23 balls they lost four wickets for 22 runs, in a display even more inept than England's three nights ago.

Instead of the 300 that had looked likely at the halfway stage of their innings, South Africa made 262. On this pitch, that was about par for the course. Even so, it allowed England back into a game they should have been batted out of. But, as they say in these parts, it is never over unless the lights stay on, which in the end they did.

## Newlands scoreboard

(South Africa won toss)

**SOUTH AFRICA**

A G Hudson c Fairbrother b Hick.....64

R P Snell c Fairbrother b Hick.....63

B N McMillen b Martin.....44

J H Rhodes c Hick b Smith.....29

W J Cronje b Cork.....19

J N Rhodes b Cork.....19

G Kirsten c Fairbrother b Cork.....2

S M Pollock c Ramprakash b Smith.....13

10 J Richardson not out.....13

N Boje not out.....2

Extras (b6, lb4, w7).....17

Total (for 8, 50 overs).....262

Fall: 1-116, 2-264, 3-197, 4-229, 5-229,

6-236, 7-237, 8-248.

Did not bat: A A Donald.

Bowling: Cork 10-0-44-3; DeFreitas 6-0-

30-0; White 6-0-37-0; Martin 6-0-43-1;

Smith 10-0-46-2; Hick 10-0-38-2; Ram-

prakash 2-0-14-0.

**ENGLAND**

P A J DeFreitas c Rhodes b Pollock.....27

M A Atherton not out.....27

G A Hick b b George.....27

G P Thorpe not out.....27

Extras (b2, w4, nb1).....1

Total (for 2, 32 overs).....79

Fall: 1-37, 2-108.

To bat: A J Stewart, M R Ramprakash,

N F Fairbrother, C White, O G Park, M K

Smith, P J Morgan.

Umpires: R Koorzen and W Dechris.

Australia and South Africa will com-

pete in a triangular limited-over series

with its hosts, India, in October and No-

vember. The board of Control for Crick-

et in India secretary, Jagmohan Dattaji,

said six Tests against South Africa had

also been agreed. South Africa will play

three Tests in India after the triangular

series and the two sides will play a fur-

ther three Tests in South Africa.

## THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

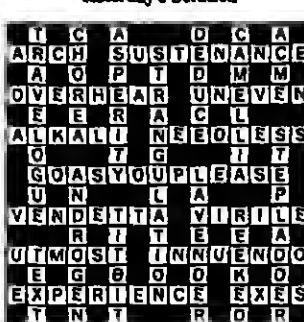
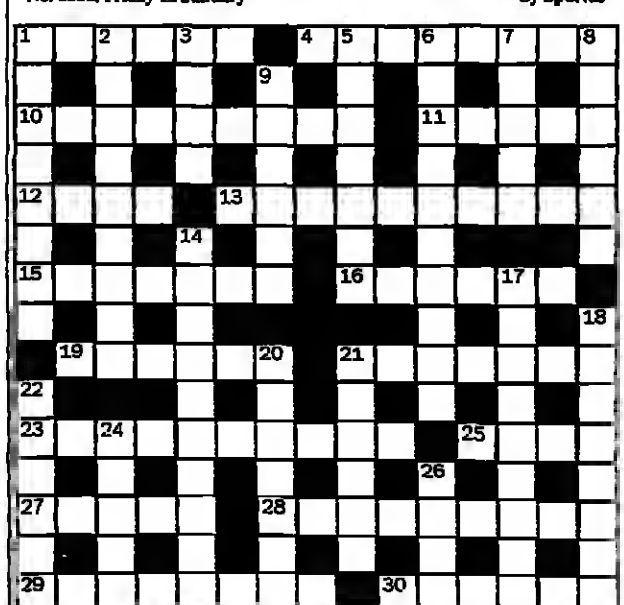
in association with



No. 2881, Friday 12 January

By Spurious

Yesterday's Solution



**ACROSS**

1 Get request in for engine component (6)

4 Seasonal offering, piece that's abandoned after 30 seconds? (5, 3)

10 Cleverly resist the sort of gear associated with videos, etc.? (3-5)

11 Is English bishop about to have a pipe? (5)

12 Recently criticised when dropping first and last items (4)

13 Bit of a flap over air intake? (10)

15 Docudrama portraying dissident minority (7)

16 Bring down equipment (6)

19 Apple take space on world wide web (6)

21 Competent secretary intercepts message (7)

23 Arrival by air (10)

25 Confier, say, in middle of thoroughfare (4)

27 Enthusiasm mother's shown about a new idea to begin with (5)

28 Conductor's lecture circumscribed by weather (9)

29 Banner possibly carried by German poet, strange lad (8)

30 Privileged inmate finally got out of practice (6)

**DOWN**

1 Succinct invitation to try something from the biography section? (3, 1, 4)

2 Sight, or one of things that improve it? (9)

3 Nymph turning up in Ohio church (4)

5 Thing, you must develop an understanding (7)

6 Reproduction formerly impressed, but it's now seen as old-fashioned (6, 4)

7 Suppose mine shaft to have very big interior (5)

8 Material that's brought over ultimately obstructs exit (6)

9 Bore hole in centre panel (6)

14 Republican Party in opposition? (6, 4)

17 Difficult far naval rating in splendid surroundings, initially ignored (9)

18 Blithely suggesting French chap's inferior to English in cunning (8)

20 Train accommodating first of diners eventually in old car (5-2)

21 Prestigious characteristic long recognised in Connecticut (6)

22 Conflict leads to more tetchiness, hostility and anger (6)

24 God-daughter wants a lovable animal (5)

26 Person taking lead article in strong case (3)

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## Rusedski marches into semis

Tennis

Greg Rusedski continued his timely run of good form in Sydney yesterday when he won through to the semi-finals of the Peters International tournament.

With the Australian Open - the first Grand Slam of the season starting on Monday - the British No1 beat Scott Draper, of Australia 6-4, 4-6, 6-3.

The unseeded Briton is joined in the last four by top seed Goran Ivanisevic, who beat another Australian, Mark Woodford, 6-4, 7-5.

It was not such a good day for another Briton, Chris Wilkin-

son, who was forced to retire from his last-16 match with the top-seeded Paul Haarhuis at the Indonesian Open.

Wilkinson, ranked 130 in the world, pulled out due to dehydration at 3-0 down in the second set, having lost the first 6-1.

Rusedski and Tim Henman - both ranked in the world's top 100 - are guaranteed a place in the draw for the Australia Open but three other British men who were attempting to qualify fell at the first hurdle in Melbourne yesterday.

Andrew Richardson, Danny Sapsford and Nick Baglin all went out in the opening round of the qualifying competition. Lincolnshire left-hander

Richardson lost 6-3, 6-2 to Steve Campbell, of the United States. Weybridge's Sapsford was beaten 6-4, 6-3 by the Italian Diego Nargiso and Baglin, from Macclesfield, went down 7-6, 6-3 to Takao Suzuki of Japan.

Britain's most experienced woman player Clare Wood, from Brighton, starts her qualifying campaign today.

Meanwhile, Monica Seles remains unbeaten in Australia despite dropping her serve and having trouble in her 6-3, 6-2 defeat of South Africa's Marian De Swardt - one of only two players to beat Steffi Graf in 1995 - in the Peters International.

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